THE

MADCAP;

A

COMEDY FOR THE DIGESTION.

IN THREE ACTS.

FROM THE GERMAN OF

AUGUSTUS VON KOTZEBUE.

By R***** H*****.

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Bt. of J. Rothwell

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

BARON FRITZ WELLINGHORST.
MR FELIX, his Guardian.
MRS BRUMBACH.
NANNETTE, her Daughter.
LISETTE, her Maid.
PIFFELBERG, a Country Squire.
HANS MOLKUS, an Invalid with a wooden leg.
A Hairdreſſer.

The Scene lies in an Inn.

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THE

MADCAP.

ACT I——SCENE I.

A HALL IN AN INN, WITH A MIDDLE DOOR AND SEVERAL SIDE DOORS, WHICH ARE NUMBERED.

FRITZ *ſtands with his arms folded before a Side Door, and looks at the number.*

No. 3.—A myſterious number!—one is tempted to become a Pythagorean:—but I ſtir not from this ſpot until I know who lives here. A female form—beautiful as if Angelica Kauffman had breathed it on the canvas.—Wife or maid? O certainly a maid; although in the church her eye was ſtedfaſtly fix'd upon the old preacher, and when my look encounter'd her's, the bloom of the apple-bloſſom fluſh'd her cheeks.—It is all one in the end. Fritz, Fritz, thou lieſt *(pointing to his heart)*; here ſomething whiſpers, Oh! that it might be a maid—a maid whoſe heart is free.

SCENE II.

LISETTE *comes to the Door and calls* MOLKUS.

Mol. (Within.) Here.
Liſette. Bring coffee. *(Goes in again.)*

Mol. Directly.

Fritz. A ſnappiſh thing; probably the chamber kitten; a handful of gold muſt be thrown into her lap. (*Molkus brings coffee.*)

Fritz. Whither goeſt *thou?*

Mol. Thou! I never belong'd to the brotherhood of the Nobodies.

Fritz. Take it not amiſs of me.—Whither do *you* take the coffee?

Mol. To N° 3.

Fritz. Who is in N° 3.?

Mol Sometimes one, and ſometimes another, as generally happens in inns.

Fritz. Then, merry fool, I *will* know——

Mol. Sir, when one knows ſomething, and another *will* know it, he muſt pay for it.

Fritz. Perfectly juſt: here is a florin and a half.

Mol. Ay, now! he who aſks reaſonable queſtions will always meet with an anſwer. Here, in N° 3. are three ladies.

Fritz. Who are they? what are their names? whence do they come? whither are they going? how long will they ſtay?

Mol. I know not, I know not, I know not.

Fritz. But you know their names?

Mol. Their names; yes, they are in the Gate Book.

Fritz Well!

Mol. The old one's name is Mrs Brumbach.

Fritz. Brumbach! I don't like the name, it carries nothing good along with it.

Mol The little roguiſh huſſy's name is Liſette, and is her maid.

Fritz. And the plump little angel!

Mol. What little angel?

Fritz. The lovely lady with the beautiful ſwan neck and lily white boſom.

Mol. That's gibberiſh to me.

Fritz.

Fritz. Blockhead! who is the third lady?

Mol. Blockhead! (*He weighs the money in his hand.*) a florin and a half—muſt take no notice of the blockhead. The third is the young Lady.

Fritz. Her name?

Mol. Probably the ſame as her mother's.

Fritz. Miſs Brumbach! Fy, that muſt not be her name.

Mol. Give her another, Sir.

Fritz. That I will, my fellow; by G—, that I will. Knoweſt thou nothing more?

Mol. Nothing; but that the coffee will be cold. (*He goes into the room.*)

Fritz. Miſs Brumbach, then. Fy! the name petrifies me. The pretty laſs is not to be blam'd for having ſuch a horrible name; and is it not in my power to change it to-day or to-morrow? Did I but once know how to ſet about ſcraping an acquaintance with her. (*He looks through the key-hole.*) There I ſee a green ſofa, but nobody upon it; on the right hand a looking glaſs, but no one before it.—I muſt, however, wait a little. (*As he again puts his eye to the key-hole, Liſette opens the door, and almoſt throws him down.*)

SCENE III.

FRITZ *and* LISETTE.

Liſette. (*Starting.*) Oho! What's the meaning of all this?

Fritz. A formal ſiege, my pretty darling; but thou madeſt a ſortie, and the enemy retreated.

Liſette. Have I hurt you, Sir?

Fritz. Yes, with thy black eyes.

Liſette. May I be ſo bold as to aſk with whom you wiſh to ſpeak?

Fritz. With thee, dear laſs.

Liſette. With me! Well, then, here I am.

Fritz. Tell me, tho', in whoſe ſervice art thou?

Liſette. In Mrs Brumbach's.

Fritz. Who is Mrs Brumbach?

Liſette. You now aſk me too much, my pretty young Gentleman. I have been only three weeks with her. Nor could I get any information from my predeceſſor; for ſhe only could endure her place fourteen days.

Fritz. And thou already three weeks! that does thee honour.

Liſette. My patience, too, is ſpun as fine as the thread in autumn on the meadow; and if the young Lady were not——

Fritz. The young Lady! Ay, well, the all-lovely Lady.

Liſette. Are you acquainted with her?

Fritz. I am acquainted with nothing elſe; in my whole life nothing——

Liſette. Where then did you ſee her?

Fritz. Yeſterday in the church.

Liſette. Never before?

Fritz. Never before.

Liſette. (*Smiling.*) The acquaintance is a little young.

Fritz. I am alſo young, and ſhe is young; in ſhort, I am deſperately in love with her.

Liſette. Ay! we are totally ignorant of that.

Fritz. But I know it by heart.

Liſette. Have you often ſuch fits?

Fritz. I muſt tell thee, Liſette, I have been in love ever ſince my eighth year, and I hope I ſhall continue ſo until my eightieth.

Liſette. The laſt object of your love will be moſt enviable.

Fritz. Thy young miſtreſs is the laſt; I will love her eternally.

Liſette.

Liſette. Eternally!

Fritz. Nothing ſhort of it.

Liſette. That tells well. Eternity is a lovely little thing, eſpecially in the mouth of a young Gentleman of twenty.

Fritz. One and twenty, if you pleaſe.

Liſette. One and twenty! I beg pardon. But may I not know the name of the knight-errant who wears the fetters of my fair Lady?

Fritz. Baron Wellinghorſt. I am rich; have neither father nor mother. To-morrow I kick minority behind me; and what my fancy prompts I am at liberty to do.

Liſette. So, ſo! Had but my young Lady the liberty to do as ſhe pleaſes.

Fritz. Do'ſt think ſhe'll be willing——

Liſette. Why not? In one ſcale, an old croſs mother; in t'other, a young affectionate gentleman: in one, a glaſs of rhubarb; in the other, a glaſs of almond milk.

Fritz. I am enraptur'd; I muſt kiſs thee.

Liſette. (*Struggling.*) Is it your general cuſtom to kiſs the ſervants of your beloved when you are in raptures?

Fritz. Always, always; it is always my manner.

Liſette. The *young Gentlemen* kiſs, the *old* give money.

Fritz. Oh! In that point I am a Methuſalem. (*Gives her a full purſe.*) There, little rogue.

Liſette. (*With feign'd refuſal.*) No, no, that was not my meaning. Really you are irreſiſtible——

Fritz. Would to God thy young miſtreſs thought ſo.

Liſette. Who knows——

Fritz. Tell her, I languiſh like Siegwart, and fret like Werter——

Liſette. And love like Tom Jones.

Fritz. That I am timid and modeſt.

Liſette.

Liſette. Throw out ſparks like a rocket.

Fritz. Which at laſt burſts into ſoft ſparkling ſtars.

Liſette. But the ſtars vaniſh.

Fritz. Dear creature, a ſimile muſt not be carried too far; it will not bear it. Let us talk of my gratitude; the eternity of which, like my love——

Liſette. I am content with four weeks.

Fritz. Joking aſide, thou could'ſt put me in a paſſion of gratitude. (*He takes a letter from his pocket, which he turns about in his hand.*) If, for example—thou wilt take a look—at this letter——

Liſette. Moſt willingly. (*She looks at it.*) It is a letter without a direction.

Fritz. It is addreſſed by me, through thee, to my future bride.

Liſette. A bride without a name! I can therefore give it to whom I pleaſe.

Fritz. Not, on any account, to the old Lady; I would rather keep it myſelf.

Liſette. No, my pretty young Gentleman of twenty-one, it goes not with love as with a poſt letter.

Fritz. Venus drives with doves; the doves fly: when ſhe yokes ſnails to, I will then go ſlower.

Liſette. My young Lady at preſent knows nothing about you; and ſhe ſhall already enter into a correſpondence with you?—that is dangerous.

Fritz She has only to read it.

Liſette. Probably the letter is copied from your eyes.

Fritz Word for word.

Liſette I know it, then, already by heart.

Fritz. But an ambaſſador without his credentials——

Liſette. Patience, patience.

Fritz. That word is not to be found in my Dictionary.

Liſette.

Liſette. Write it in it then. Keep your tender epiſtle; I will tell her, that a young ſlender Gentleman, with a pair of great wild eyes, has determined to love her ever. Was it not ſo?

Fritz. Exactly.

Liſette. That he is a rich Baron; and to-morrow will be his own maſter.

Fritz. Right.

Liſette. And that he will marry her the day after to-morrow——

Fritz. Why not to-morrow evening?

Liſette. If the mother do not withhold her bleſſing.

Fritz. Chance has made a Baron of me; fortune has bequeath'd to me two handſome eſtates: What objection can ſhe have to me?

Liſette. She will ſay, "Children muſt not marry."

Fritz. She may ſay that in two years to our children.

Liſette. The mother ſhares not the myrtle-wreath willingly with the daughter.

Fritz. What! will the old one make a ſecond trial upon matrimony?

Liſette. The third.

Fritz. Bravo!

Liſette. She vex'd her firſt huſband to death; the ſecond is run away from her; the third ſhe'll keep better confin'd.

Fritz. Really; and yet ſhe drags her daughter along with her; auctions crab-apples, while ſhe has peaches.

Liſette. We fancy the peaches are not yet ripe; *we* call Miſs Nannette the little girl, the child.

Fritz. Miſs Nannette! Is that her name?

Liſette. Yes.

Fritz. A dear lovely name; I am in raptures with it: I muſt kiſs thee.

Liſette. What, again ſo ſoon.

Fritz.

Fritz. Had thy young Lady half a dozen of ſuch ſweet pretty names, I would kiſs thee ſix times.

Liſette. Softly, Sir; ſhould any one ſurpriſe us, it would be thought that you were in love with me.

Fritz. Why not? I am in love with thee too: I have been in love with eight girls at once.

Liſette. A weighty recommendation.

Fritz. I was young then.

Liſette. To be ſure conſtancy is no attendant upon youth.

Fritz. But if thou think'ſt that a heart is leſs ardent becauſe divided, let the fire of my kiſſes convince thee——

Liſette. (*Struggling.*) Baron, Baron!

Felix. (*Standing at the door.*) Fritz! Fritz! (*Liſette cries, and runs away.*)

SCENE IV.

FELIX *in a night-gown.* FRITZ.

Fritz. Up ſo ſoon, dear Felix?

Felix. I might put that queſtion to you; it is your general cuſtom to ſleep a few hours longer than I.

Fritz. Ah! love robs me of ſleep.

Felix. Again? already? It was the ſame caſe three miles off.

Fritz. Three miles! exactly three? really that is ominous.

Felix. How ſo?

Fritz. Look at the Three on yonder door.

Felix. Well.

Fritz. There lives my beloved.

Felix. She that juſt now ran away?

Fritz. No; that was nothing but her maid; a ſtar of the ſixth magnitude compared to a ſun.

Felix.

Felix. I am already accuſtomed to ſuns and angels.

Fritz. Dear Felix, if Mahomet could ſtick the moon in his ſleeve, I can alſo marry the ſun.

Felix. You will then burn your wings.

Fritz. You jeſt; but I am in earneſt.

Felix. God forbid!

Fritz. Why?

Felix. Becauſe amongſt twenty wives, only one ſufferable one is found; and amongſt a hundred, only one good one.

Fritz. You are a woman-hater.

Felix. A burnt child dreads the fire; but the youth ruſhes into the flames.

Fritz. It is ſo ſweet to burn with *flame.*

Felix. I know it, and bought my experience dear.

Fritz. Think only her name's Nannette!

Felix. And if her name were Angelica, it is not the name that makes the angel.

Fritz. She is ſcarcely ſixteen.

Felix. She will torment you the longer.

Fritz. She is beautiful as a roſe-bud.

Felix. The more butterflies will ſwarm about her.

Fritz. She is gentle as a dove.

Felix. The women are all gentle; but only when from home.

Fritz. We may jog on ſo the whole day.

Felix. Young friend, you make a jeſt of the moſt important concern of your life.

Fritz. Exactly the contrary; I find that it is the moſt pleaſant. To love a handſome girl, be lov'd by her in return, and marry her, what can be more pleaſant?

Felix. It is well I am acquainted with you, and know how quick your ſparks expire.

Fritz. For this reaſon, that they were but ſparks; but now it is a Trojan blaze.

Felix. Dear Fritz, no romance ſtories; you know

the world. Led by my hand, you have travell'd over all Europe, and ſeen other things than poſthouſes.

Fritz. Yes, dear Felix; I thank you for my knowledge of men.

Felix. You know men, and know not yourſelf.

Fritz. It is ſaid the ſeven wiſe men of Greece were in a ſimilar ſituation.

Felix. When you have call'd Nannette your own a year——

Fritz. I have then paſs'd 365 happy days.

Felix. And the ſecond year?

Fritz. A day more, if it be leap year.

Felix. Would to God my own terrible example might prove a warning to you! I was once married; and am, perhaps, yet.

Fritz. Perhaps! There lies not much tenderneſs in this *Perhaps*.

Felix. I play'd a romance with my wife; I gap'd with her at the moon, inſtead of looking into her heart: the ſunſhine of reaſon afterwards ſhew'd me that I was miſerably deceiv'd.

Fritz. Then you open'd your Xenophon, and read the life of Socrates.

Felix. My Xantippe handed me daily the bowl of poiſon. Vanity, poſitiveneſs, and eſpecially that curs'd continual clack, chac'd me at laſt from my home into the wide world.

Fritz. You ſuffer'd her to remain?

Felix. It was not right. I confeſs to you my weakneſſes, to guard you from falling into them: I left her my whole property, and a daughter; and took nothing with me but the ſmall ſtock of knowledge which I had acquired.

Fritz. Eſpecially the knowledge of women.

Felix. The name of Felix, which I aſſum'd, ſcreen'd me from all inquiries; and during your infancy I came into your father's houſe.

Felix.

Fritz. Poor Man! Why did you not call yourſelf Infelix?

Felix. The friendſhip of your father, your excellent diſpoſition and kindneſs, has for the laſt twelve years thrown a ſhade over my ſorrow.

Fritz. My father died, and bequeath'd to me the pleaſant duty of ſupplying his friendſhip for you.

Felix. You can do it, if it be your wiſh.

Fritz. We muſt never part.

Felix. If my age will not become tireſome to you.

Fritz. I could not be happy without you.

Felix. I love you as my ſon; and guard you from the rocks of life with the ſame affection as if I were your father. The laſt words of your excellent parent ſtill vibrate in my ears.

Fritz. Follow the ſteps of this man, ſaid he to me; my bleſſing then will ever reſt upon thee.

Felix. To-morrow you are of age, and then my command over you ceaſes. You are maſter of your property and your perſon. The friend can only entreat and admoniſh.

Fritz. The friend! that title makes me rich: but, my dear Felix, why ſhould my marriage be unfortunate becauſe yours was?

Felix. I do not ſay ſo: many a one has gain'd a prize; but let the fire of romance firſt evaporate.

Fritz. That may yet blaze long. I lately ſaw Iffland's Old Batchelors acted; and my heart ſympathiz'd ſo much with poor Rheinhold, that I reſolv'd at all events to thruſt my neck into the matrimonial nooſe.

Felix. You are much too young.

Fritz. Youth is eaſily contented—

Felix. And eaſier ſatisfied.

Fritz. He who is forty years in chooſing, does not always make a good choice.

Felix. You are perfectly unacquainted with your

new inamorata: You have ſeen a book bound in the Engliſh manner, but are ignorant of its contents.

Fritz. Would God have bound a bad book ſo handſomely?

Felix. An hour's reflection is better than a year's repentance.

Fritz. Right, dear Felix: I will try Nannette with all the foreſight with which a lover goes to work.

Felix. (Smiling) That is all, to be ſure, which a lover can promiſe.

Fritz. In the firſt place, I have written to her this letter; in which I have told her that I adore her.

Felix. The beſt way to learn to know her.

Fritz. Could I but deviſe a method of delivering it to her.——

Felix. Roſes are pluck'd in their time.

Fritz. If the roſes be already in flower, there is no time to loſe.

Felix. You call'd me your friend; well, then, make uſe of my eyes. Love has plac'd no ſpectacles before them.

Fritz. Is love, then, a dealer in ſpectacles? or is it ſometimes better to borrow a microſcope of the ſpleen? He who breaks aſunder the ſpectacles of others, merits few thanks. Have a little patience, and you ſhall ſee my Nannette, and be yourſelf enraptur'd with her.—The ſoft blue eye—the modeſt grace—the lovely ſhyneſs—the bewitching innocence—tall as a Grecian—blooming as a Circaſſian—the boſom of a Turk—and the teeth of a Moor (*a waiting-woman croſſes the Stage with a bunch of keys. Fritz ſees her*). Stop there! what the devil—a neat made thing—Harkee, dear little one—run not ſo quick.—The duce take thee—thou little ſatan, can'ſt thou not ſtop? (*He runs after her*).

Felix.

Felix. That's the way; every white apron ſets him in a flame. Fooliſh boy! that takes the fire of youth for love! and woe to the poor girl who throws her myrtle wreath into ſuch a ſtraw flame! (*He goes into his room*).

SCENE V.

MRS BRUMBACH'S ROOM.

LISETTE; *directly afterwards* NANNETTE.

Liſette. (*Counts the money which Fritz gave her*) Eight dollars and a gold piece: the young man pleaſes me. He is as raſh as an enſign, and generous as a prince. Let me ſee; how ſhould a knowing maid act in this caſe? Here burns the fire, and there lies the ſtraw. She muſt draw the ſtraw a little nearer to the fire, give a puff, and the buſineſs is done.

Nannette. (*enters*) Is my mother riſen already?

Liſette. O yes; ſhe is combing Mops.

Nannette. (*yawning*) What day of the week is this?

Liſette. Monday.

Nannette. That's a pity.

Liſette. How ſo?

Nannette. It is ſo long until Sunday.

Liſette. Did the laſt ſermon pleaſe you ſo well?

Nannette. The ſermon! oh no; but in the church we ſee other people beſide ourſelves,—we dare not ſo much as ſtep out of the houſe during the whole week.

Liſette. We ſee, and are ſeen.

Nannette. Who looks at my ſhabby hat, and ſimple white dreſs? I am really aſhamed that my mother gives me nothing better.

Liſette.

Liſette. Mother Nature has been the more generous to you.

Nannette. When I ſit amongſt the flounc'd and furbelow'd ladies, I am very ſenſible that my mother is in the right.

Liſette. In what?

Nannette. She calls me always a little ſtupid ugly thing.

Liſette. There are people who maintain the contrary.

Nannette. Yes, Mr Piffelberg once told me that I was pretty; but my mother became angry, and then he ſaid it was not ſo.

Liſette. But I know a young gentleman who would not retract his words, if your mother were to fret and fume ten times.

Nannette. Thou knoweſt him! ah, how fortunate thou art, thou knoweſt ſo many men.

Liſette. I have only known this one a few hours; but he has prattled ſo much to me about you, that it would take me half a year to repeat it.

Nannette. About me! oh tell me, Liſy, tell me!

Liſette. He is young—thin—ſpirited—in love—

Nannette. In love! with whom?

Liſette. With Miſs Nannette Brumbach.

Nannette. With me! oh my God, how thou haſt frighten'd me!

Liſette. With what?

Nannette. We muſt tell that to my mother.

Liſette. Ay, why not this inſtant?

Nannette. You are joking with me.

Liſette. Not in the leaſt; he will marry you.

Nannette. Marry me! oh I ſhall faint!

Liſette. No matter.

Nannette. Tell me, can I be married ſo ſoon?

Liſette. Why not, if it be a proper match for you.

Nannette. Thou makeſt me ſmile.

Liſette. He is rich, and a Baron.

Nannette.

Nannette. Are Barons, then, ſo amiable?

Liſette. Not always: but I'll wager this one will pleaſe you.

Nannette. If he loves me, thou'lſt win thy wager.

Liſette. As I told him your name was Nannette, he flew into ſuch raptures that he embrac'd me.

Nannette. Was that a proof of his love?

Liſette. Ay, ſurely it was.

Nannette. Very odd! I don't like that in him.

Liſette. He requeſted me alſo to carry a letter to you.

Nannette. Quick! where is it?

Liſette. Truly that would be proper; I gave him a ſevere reproof.

Nannette. Fy! that was abſurd: I have never yet received a letter from any body.

Liſette. We muſt firſt become better acquainted with him.

Nannette. The poor man will grow melancholy.

Liſette. There is no neceſſity for it; nor does he ſeem much addicted to it.

Nannette. But what will all this come to?

Liſette. Advice comes in its proper ſeaſon. Your mother will certainly remain a long time here; for the romance with Mr Piffelberg comes to be ſerious: during that time an opportunity will certainly preſent itſelf, when you may ſee and ſpeak to your admirer.

Nannette. See and ſpeak! what art thou talking about? I could not raiſe my eyes, nor utter a ſingle word.

Liſette. That is, then, his buſineſs. Who knows what may happen? He has a pretty eſtate; and if you become Baroneſs Wellinghorſt, I will go with you, and marry his ſteward.

Nannette. Yes, yes; but then he ſhall embrace thee no more.

Liſette. Silence; your mother comes.

SCENE

SCENE VI.

MRS BRUMBACH. *The former.*

Nannette (kiſſes her mother's hand) Good morning to you, dear mama.

Mrs *Brum.* Good morning to you, little thing. My God! how thou look'ſt to-day! healthy and blooming as a country wench!

Nannette. I have ſlept well.

Mrs *Brum.* But thou ſhould'ſt not ſleep well: It is unbecoming in a girl of condition to ſleep the whole night through, like a marmot.

Nannette It is with difficulty I keep my eyes open after ſupper.

Mrs *Brum.* That is a vulgar cuſtom (*places herſelf at the tea-table*). A well-bred woman knows always how to be indiſpoſed with addreſs; and, God be thank'd, I have not paſſed an hour during my whole life free from ſickneſs!

Liſette. A certain—ſoft—gentle—languiſh—has thereby been diffuſed over all your manners.

Mrs *Brum.* The men are tyrants! How dare we trample ſo often upon the rights of thoſe Atlaſſes, if we did not know how to make our weakneſs intereſting? Irritated nerves, Cramps—Pyrmont water in ſummer, and Valerian pills in winter, have already metamorphoſed many a bluſt'ring ſpouſe into a pliant huſband! But theſe motherly leſſons accord not with thy years. Go, child, into my cloſet; read the morning benediction, and take Mops on thy lap. I have ſomething to ſay to Liſette.

[*Exit Nannette.*

Mrs *Brum.* Has Mr Piffelberg not been here yet?

Liſette. He went very early this morning to the chace.

Mrs *Brum.* Poor rogue, anxiety deprives him of ſleep.

ſleep. Give me thy opinion, Liſette. Shall I marry him?

Liſette. That queſtion, my Lady, ſhould be put to your own heart.

Mrs *Brum.* Heaven defend me! I rejoice that the days are paſt in which the heart had the aſcendency, and reaſon was juggled by dreams. Love is a good ſervant, but a bad maſter. Marriage is a bad cuſtom; which one muſt, however, fall into, as into an afternoon's nap in Spain: though woe to the fool who bends her neck where ſhe was born to command.

Liſette. With Mr Piffelberg——

Mrs *Brum.* One hazard's nothing. All is right; and that is no ſmall weight in the ſcale of my affection for him. A woman cannot now appear with any conſequence in the world, unleſs ſhe dangles along with her a creature that wears man's clothes; and Piffelberg will do as well for this as any other. His eſtate, to be ſure, is involved in debt; but he is of an ancient family, and is a good harmleſs ſort of a man:—A certain poliſh, a certain fineneſs of taſte, is very viſibly wanting in him; but ſo much the better.—Nature! Nature! nothing ſurpaſſes thee!——Where are my teeth?

Liſette. Upon the table in your bed-chamber.

Mrs *Brum.* The man ſeems really heartily devoted to me:—In the mean time, I'll put his obedience to the proof.

Liſette. And if he *ſtands ſtaunch*——

Mrs *Brum.* So be it. I am tir'd of wand'ring about ſo long alone in the world; I want a man to manage my affairs, and take the office of ſcolding the poſtilion and the inn-keeper. When I come ſerioufly to think that I have ſtill to provide for a little child——

Liſette. Have you yet a little child?

Mrs *Brum.* My God! haſt thou forgot Nannette?

Liſette. Oh! the young lady?

Mrs *Brum.* What lady? what young? ſhe is a child, who knows not how to diſtinguiſh her right hand from her left. I hope you do not fill her head with ſuch nonſenſe.

Liſette. God forbid! ſhe is almoſt ignorant that ſhe has a head.

Mrs *Brum.* Then thou ſee'ſt a mother's care is a heavy one.—One can confide nothing to you ſervants beyond Mops and the canary birds.—My future huſband will have much to do.

Liſette. You could ſoon free yourſelf of your care for your daughter.

Mrs *Brum.* How ſo?

Liſette. Take the firſt good offer which preſents itſelf.

Mrs *Brum.* Art thou mad? Ha! ha! ha! the child a huſband! We marry not our girls as the Ruſſians their children.

Liſette. But if one ſhould be found who is willing——

Mrs *Brum.* Be ſilent: early marriage, late repentance. The daughter's feelings muſt be regulated by the mother's reflections. Hymen at Amor's hands is a Moloch to whom I will not ſacrifice my child.

Liſette. It would alſo be injurious to Mops, he has ſo attach'd himſelf to your daughter.

Mrs *Brum.* For that very reaſon:—No, ſo long as Mops lives, Nannette muſt not think of marriage.

A Servant enters. Herr Von Piffelberg waits upon you.

Mrs *Brum.* He is welcome. Go, Liſette; leave us together.

Liſette. (*aſide*) The hour of folly ſtrikes. (*Exit.*

SCENE

SCENE VII.

MRS BRUMBACH, Mr PIFFELBERG *in a Hunter's Dreſs.*

Piff. Health and happineſs to you, dear Madam. A freſh morning:—I have bath'd my feet in dew.

Mrs *Brum.* You ſpeak as poetically as if you had read Kleiſt or Thomſon!

Piff. Kleiſt? My couſin ſerv'd in that regiment. Thomſon is the name of the miller on my eſtate—The fellow is a poacher!

Mrs *Brum.* Is your chace a good one?

Piff. The beſt in the country. Marry me, and you ſhall ſee a chace, or even a fox baiting. The devil take me, Madam, you are old; but you will ſay, that in your life you have ſeen nothing equal to it.

Mrs *Brum.* It appears to me, Sir, that you underſtand as little of the age of a lady as of the Chineſe language.

Piff. There you are right. I ſpeak German.

Mrs *Brum.* And very coarſe German.

Piff. I know how to judge of the age of a horſe to a day; I need only look at his teeth.

Mrs *Brum.* Will you not go below into the ſtable?

Piff. What ſhall I do there? The innkeeper has a pair of black horſes twenty years old.

Mrs *Brum.* There your language will be better underſtood.

Piff. Have I again been guilty of ſtupidity?—Take it not amiſs of me: I am a plain ſpoken man; but my meaning is as honeſt as my ſpaniel!

Mrs *Brum.* Really! when one cannot place any confidence in your words——

Piff. What are words? If the heart has but its proper charge. Dear Madam, put a finiſhing ſtroke

to this buſineſs. Shake hands; to-morrow is the wedding, and the day after the chace.

Mrs *Brum.* What are you thinking of? At my years——

Piff. That is my reaſon, neither of us have any time to loſe. I have been alſo ſome time out of my leading ſtrings.

Mrs *Brum.* My God! how old do you take me to be?

Piff. Have you not told me your ſecond huſband fell in the ſeven years war?

Mrs *Brum.* Why not at the deſtruction of Troy?

Piff. What is war? What is Troy? I love peace, and I would marry you, even had you gone to ſchool with Methuſalem. Come on, dear Madam, don't miſtake the matter; come to Piffelberg. My Paſtor ſhall proclaim us twice from the pulpit; and afterwards, in God's name, be fruitful and multiply.—

Mrs *Brum.* Not ſo raſh, Mr Sportſman! To ſhoot a partridge and to win a woman are two different things.

Piff. Have I not liſtened long enough to your objections? I think it is time to halloo!

Mrs *Brum.* (*Aſide*) Stop, I will lay the foundation to my dominion, and heat thy brains a little. (*Loud*) There is nothing more inſupportable than a marriage which is ſtruck off like a bargain, in which not the ſmalleſt youthful imprudence is viſible—neither duel nor ſuicide—neither night nor elopement—to enliven the ſcene.

Piff. But, God's fiſh! with whom ſhall I fight? with whom ſhall I elope?

Mrs *Brum.* Our romance ſhall not end ſo tragically; but there are yet a thouſand things to conſider of.

Piff. A thouſand! that's a pretty number. Begin.

Mrs

Mrs *Brum.* And a thouſand little etiquettes to obſerve.

Piff. My ſoul! in them I am but a ſcholar.

Mrs *Brum.* We muſt be undiſturbed.

Piff. Who can diſturb us?

Mrs *Brum.* Could we not be ſurpris'd every moment by my daughter and my maid?

Piff. We will ſend them away again.

Mrs *Brum.* That is againſt the rules of propriety. Know you what? you door leads into the garden; here have you the key belonging to it. When the hour of the ſpirits ſtrikes, I await you here.

Piff. At midnight, hugh! then prowls the ſavage hunter.

Mrs *Brum.* I hope you are not afraid.

Piff. Not juſt that: my only fear is that I overſleep myſelf. *(He takes the key.)*

Mrs *Brum.* You might then look early in the morning for a ſweetheart in the dew.

Piff. But why come through the garden? the houſe is an inn; it ſtands open all night; no perſon will refuſe me entrance.

Mrs *Brum.* Will you ſacrifice my reputation to the ſlander of every body? And then the garden—the freſh nocturnal breezes—the melodious notes of the nightingales——

Piff. The nightingales don't ſing juſt now.

Mrs *Brum.* Short and good, Sir; the way to my heart is through the garden.

Piff. Well, well; I did not know that your heart was a garden-houſe.

Mrs *Brum.* Obſerve, the ſimile is not amiſs. A garden-houſe—an arbour—illumin'd by the moon's faint ray——

Piff. The moon does not ſhine juſt now.

Mrs *Brum.* We wander in the coolneſs through the leafy walks——

Piff. And both catch cold.

Mrs

Mrs *Brum.* A lover ought not to be afraid of a conſumption.

Piff. If I have not my proper quantum of ſleep in the night, I am not worth a charge of powder the whole day.

Mrs *Brum.* So much the better—Nothing venture, nothing have.

Piff. I think, Madam, we will leave theſe trifles to young people. If we ſum up our reſpective ages, they will be found to amount to a little more than a century.

Mrs *Brum.* The man will make a Sybil of me!

Piff. We have both the gout!

Mrs *Brum.* Your underſtanding is much crippled.

Piff. I am tormented with pains in my back; and you have ſometimes the chincough!

Mrs *Brum.* Oh God! how I feel—I faint.

Piff. There's no danger; ſwallow a handful of gunpowder!

Mrs *Brum.* Nannette—Liſette—Help! Help!

SCENE VIII.

NANNETTE, LISETTE. *The former.*

Liſ. What is the matter?

Nan. What ails you, dear Mama?

Mrs *Brum.* Give me my ſalts—my ſalts!

Liſ. (*Holds them to her noſe*) The young Squire Piffelberg has certainly been taking ſome liberties.

Piff. What young Squire? I am an old man (*half aſide*) and ſhe is already as white as a Ruſſian hare in winter.

Mrs *Brum.* Get out of my ſight.

Piff. (*Aſide*) Zounds, ſhe is in a paſſion. (*Loud*) Dear darling, it was not meant amiſs.

Mrs *Brum.* Begone, I ſay.

Piff.

Piff. Think on the pretty duet in the *Coſa Rara.* "Let peace reign amongſt us."

Mrs *Brum.* A glorious Lubino!

Piff. I will ſend you an excellent ſow into your kitchen.

Mrs *Brum.* Go to the devil with thy ſwine!

Piff. My ſoul—it grows hot.

Liſ. Do you not hear? you are to go.

Piff. Yes, yes; but may I not return?

Mrs *Brum.* Never more.

Piff. Well, well, I know already what is to be done; and if it does not ſucceed, I'll blow a retreat, and couple the dogs. [*Exit.*

Mrs *Brum.* He really goes, without once throwing himſelf at my feet!

Liſ. You muſt forgive him, he is a little ſtiff.

Nan. Dear Mama, are the Ruſſian hares white in winter?

Mrs *Brum.* Thou art a gooſe.

Nan. If my love ſaid the ſame to me, I would give him his diſmiſſal that very inſtant.

Mrs *Brum.* Is it poſſible? what am I doom'd to hear? Soon will the children in the cradle ſtammer to each other, "I love thee." Every doll will be a Cupid, and ever ſugar paper-caſe a billet doux. Miſs Pert, doſt thou know what thoſe things are which we call lovers?

Nan. Not exactly.

Mrs *Brum.* Let me hear, what doſt thou imagine them to be?

Nan. A lover is a creature——that I could bear very well.

Liſ. Right, Miſs, it cannot be defin'd.

Mrs *Brum.* Beware of a lover more than of the ſun in the dog days. The one only ſpoils thy ſkin; the other thy heart.

Liſ. And if he does not ſpoil it, he takes it quite away.

Nan.

Nan. One could ſwear it was made for it.

Mrs *Brum.* A lover is a cunning creature, who profits by thy weakneſs.

Nan. Does it then betray a weakneſs in having a lover?

Liſ. Sometimes.

Mrs *Brum.* He lies at thy feet as a ſlave; as a ſlave let him lie——

Nan. Poor fellow!

Mrs *Brum.* If thou raiſeſt him, he becomes thy tyrant.

Liſ. The villain!

Mrs *Brum.* A lover is a ſecond Proteus; in every form he ſteals into thy favour.

SCENE IX.

FRITZ, *dreſſed as a Hairdreſſer, with the powder bag under his arm, puts his head in at the door.*

Fritz. Beg pardon; come I right here?

Liſ. (Smiling) Certainly, in every form.

Mrs *Brum.* Whom do you ſeek, my friend?

Fritz. The lovely Mrs Brumbach.

Mrs *Brum.* I am Mrs Brumbach. But ſpeak with reverence.

Fritz. With us country people, love and reverence are inſeparable.

Liſ. (Secretly to Nannette) Miſs, that is the young Baron.

Nan. (Screams) Ah!

Mrs *Brum.* What ails thee, ſilly thing?

Nan. Nothing, dear Mama.

Liſ. You have terrified her ſo much about the lover.

Nan. Muſt I run away when I ſee one?

Mrs *Brum.* Yes, if I be not preſent.

Fritz

Fritz. In the country here children ſoon grow wiſe.

Mrs *Brum.* True, friend; but what do you want?

Fritz. I wiſh to have the honour of putting your ſilken locks into curls.

Mrs *Brum.* You have given yourſelf unneceſſary trouble; I have a hairdreſſer.

Fritz. Quite right; he is my maſter. He is taken ill, and ſends me, to enjoy the inexpreſſible felicity of being in your company.

Mrs *Brum.* So, ſo! What is the matter with him?

Fritz. He—he has—broke his leg.

Mrs *Brum.* Poor man! How did that happen?

Fritz. He went to the top of St Ann's Tower: on his return, his foot ſlip'd, and he fell down ſeventy-ſeven ſteps!

Mrs *Brum.* Ay, ay! he who ſoars too near the ſun will burn his wings. Liſette, bring me the powdering gown.

Liſ. (*Brings the gown*) Friend, have you been long at the trade?

Fritz. I hope ſoon to be Maſter. (*He begins to dreſs.*)

Liſ. You will then probably marry.

Fritz. (*With a ſtolen look at Nannette*) Yes, if my love does not refuſe me.

Mrs *Brum.* Of what country are you?

Fritz. Of Alſace; an emigrant. Should I be diſcovered, it is all over with me.

Mrs *Brum.* You muſt take good care of yourſelf.

Fritz. I take all poſſible pains to deceive thoſe who are *willing* to be deceiv'd.

Mrs *Brum.* There you are in the right. Have you many cuſtomers in town?

Fritz. I forget them all in your Ladyſhip's company.

Mrs *Brum.* You are a droll man. Do you dreſs Mrs Hengſtberg?

Fritz. Mrs Hengſtberg? O yes.

Mrs *Brum.* What age do you think the Lady is?

Fritz. Mrs Hengſtberg? What age? you might almoſt be her daughter.

Mrs *Brum.* *(Smiling)* Not quite that; ſhe is a few years younger than I.

Fritz. Is it poſſible? *(He ſhews Nannette the letter; Liſette takes it, and gives it to her.)*

Mrs *Brum.* The cauſe of her looking ſo old is very natural; her diſſolute manner of living——

Fritz. Were I her huſband, I would ſtop her career.

Mrs *Brum.* She has no huſband.

Fritz. That is true; ſhe is a widow.

Mrs *Brum.* No; ſhe is divorc'd.

Fritz. Or divorc'd; it is much the ſame thing. *(Nannette attempts to eſcape with the letter.)*

Mrs *Brum.* Whither art thou going?

Nan. To my room.

Mrs *Brum.* Stay where thou art; thou haſt nothing to do there. *(Nannette opens ſlily the letter.)*

Mrs *Brum.* Did the Revolution drive you from your country?

Fritz. Alas! yes. They wiſh'd to force freedom upon me; but (*with a look towards Nannette*) I love ſlavery too well.

Mrs *Brum.* To be ſure, the hairdreſſers are ſervants of luxury.

Fritz. It was my wiſh to fly to England; but ſince Pitt has laid a tax upon powder, there is little to earn there.

Mrs *Brum.* Liſette, give me—— (*as ſhe turns her head, ſhe ſees Nannette reading*) Hey, Miſs! what haſt thou there?

Nan. (*Terrified*) Nothing, dear Mama.

Mrs *Brum.* Nothing! I will ſee it; here with it.

Nan. It is—It is—

Liſ. It is a paper.

Mrs

Mrs *Brum.* Will you obey?

Fritz. Ah! (*Fumbling in his powder-bag.*) it will be the letter which I had in my powder-bag.

Mrs *Brum.* What letter?

Fritz. Your roguiſh maid has certainly been the thief.

Liſ. Hum! You might have choſen a more polite expreſſion.

Mrs *Brum.* I will know its contents.

Fritz. Between ourſelves, kind Lady—but you muſt not betray me—it is a letter to Mrs Hengſtberg.

Mrs *Brum.* To Mrs Hengſtberg! Let me ſee it.

Fritz. It was lying on her table as I dreſs'd her this morning.

Mrs *Brum.* What imprudence!

Fritz. In a twinkling it was in my powder-bag. Permit me, Madam, to read it to you.

Mrs *Brum.* Read, friend. Nannette, go to thy room.

Fritz. Why? The little Miſs will not be able to underſtand it.

Mrs *Brum.* It accords not with my notion of things to ſuffer children to hear ſuch nonſenſe. But ſtay, and take a good leſſon from it.

Fritz. (*Reads, with ſtolen looks at Nannette.*) "Beautiful and lovely being"——

Mrs *Brum.* Beautiful! ſhe has grey eyes, and is freckled.

Fritz. (*Reads*) "I have ſeen thee but once, but my heart is devoted to thee for ever"——

Mrs *Brum.* The fool! What is his name?

Fritz. There is no ſignature.

Mrs *Brum.* Go on.

Fritz. (*Reads.*) "As thou yeſterday cam'ſt from church"——

Mrs *Brum.* From church! The woman is not much addicted to church-going.

Fritz. (*Reads.*) "By the ſide of thy old ugly mother"——

Mrs *Brum.* That is true. The mother is indeed an ugly woman, and as malicious as a cat——

Nan. And as proud as a peacock——

Liſ. And as ſtupid as a gooſe.

Mrs *Brum.* Malicious, proud, and ſtupid. A ſtriking picture: Ha! ha! ha!——

Fritz. and *Liſ.* Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Fritz. (*Reads.*) "There thy appearance ſtruck me, like Hebe led by the old Sybil"——

Mrs *Brum.* The enamour'd Celadon has ſtudied mythology.

Fritz. (*Reads.*) "I am young, rich, and violently in love with thee"——

Mrs *Brum.* Three excellent qualities.

Fritz. (*Reads.*) "I love thee beyond expreſſion"——

Mrs *Brum.* My God! how very inſipid will that be.

Fritz. (*Reads.*) "Unite thyſelf to a youth whoſe intentions are honourable"——

Mrs *Brum.* The honour of a lover is ſuſpicious.

Fritz (*Reads.*) "Whoſe condition is equal to thy own, and who will deliver thee from maternal tyranny"——

Mrs *Brum.* I was ignorant of that; the mother is completely under the direction of the daughter.

Fritz. (*Reads.*) "Let us attempt to deceive thy mother"——

Mrs *Brum.* That will be a very eaſy matter.

Fritz. (*Reads.*) "And if all fails, fly into the arms of him who adores thee."

Mrs *Brum.* An elopement! Well, that is yet worſe. How will I laugh at the old one? Is the tender nonſenſe finiſh'd?

Fritz. Not a ſyllable more.

Liſ.

Lif. I think the young man has expreſs'd himſelf intelligibly enough.

Nan. Very intelligibly.

Mrs *Brum.* To be ſure, if thou had'ſt ſenſe enough to comprehend it.

Lif. What would you ſay, Miſs, were any one to write you ſuch a letter?

Nan. I would not allow a perſon to play his jokes upon my mother.

Lif. You would therefore refuſe the ardent youth?

Nan. Not exactly that.

Mrs *Brum.* How can'ſt thou ſo diſconcert the child?

Nan. Indeed, Mama, I am very much diſconcerted.

Mrs *Brum.* So! Hengſtberg in correſpondence with a young incognito?

Fritz. I have already diſcovered who it is.

Mrs *Brum.* Speak, quick!

Fritz. A certain Baron Wellinghorſt.

Mrs *Brum.* Baron Wellinghorſt! Ay! that is a circumſtance I muſt impart to four of my moſt confidential friends at the tea-table this afternoon.

SCENE X.

A Hairdreſſer. The former.

Hair. I humbly wiſh you good morning, Madam.

Mrs *Brum.* My God, Maſter! have not you broke your leg?

Hair. Broke my leg!

Lif. Did you not aſcend the ſteps of St Ann's Tower?——

Nan. And fall down ſeventy-ſeven ſteps?

Hair.

Hair. Seventy-ſeven ſteps!

Fritz. But you *might* have broke your leg?

Hair. Might have broke!

Fritz. But this time you were fortunate enough to eſcape with a ſprain?

Hair. With a ſprain! I don't know what you are talking about.

Mrs *Brum.* Why, then, did you ſend me your man?

Hair. My man!

Fritz. (*Winking at him.*) To be ſure, dear Maſter, did you not ſend me to dreſs this Lady?

Hair. Not at all! As long as I have a pair of ſound legs, I can attend to my cuſtomers myſelf.

Fritz. But you dreſs not with the legs?

Hair. Madam, the fellow is a bungler.

Fritz. (*Attempts to put ſome money into his hands.*) Only underſtand me right.

Hair. What is there to underſtand? I underſtand that you are an ignorant fellow. Where have you your cuſtomers?

Fritz. (*Tries to ſlip the money into his hand.*) Here! Here!

Hair. Nothing here! I have ſtill a few halfpence left to buy me a can of beer.

Nan. (*Aſide.*) Oh! I'm undone.

Mrs *Brum.* Then he is not your man?

Hair. As much as your Mops. He is an impoſtor; a vagrant.

Mrs *Brum.* Young blockhead, what has induced you to intrude yourſelf upon me?

Fritz. (*In a ſomewhat ludicrous manner.*) Well, then, I will confeſs all. I am an unfortunate, whoſe deſtiny was not ſung to him in his cradle—I ſaw you, Madam—I got a ſimple glimpſe of you—Have I not ſaid enough?

Mrs *Brum.* What do you mean?

Fritz.

Fritz. Is love a crime? Then may he forgive me, who made my heart ſo tender, and you ſo amiable. The moſt violent paſſion ſeiz'd me; yet accompanied with diffidence. My only wiſh was to ſee you; to be near you. I thought of means, and I fell on this innocent artifice; but my lips never would have uttered a confeſſion, which condemns me for ever from your preſence. *(He falls upon his knees.)* Puniſh me now; puniſh me with the force of your charms.

Mrs *Brum.* My friend, you lie, or you are a fool. Riſe, you are forgiven.

Fritz. (*Riſes.*) Oh! I muſt away (*with a look towards Nannette*); but my heart ſtays behind.

Mrs *Brum.* Who told you that you muſt away! You are a young Good-for-nothing, whom future correction may reform. Maſter, you ſee well there is nothing to be done with the young man.

Hair. Nothing to be done! He muſt be put into the correction houſe.

Mrs *Brum.* If I forgive his preſumption, I think you may do ſo.

Hair. It is nothing to you, Madam: You loſe not a farthing by him; but I have my trade ſpoil'd.

Mrs *Brum.* Short and good, Maſter, there is your money. It is at my own option to be dreſs'd by whom I pleaſe; and I now take the young man for my valet.

Fritz. (*Kiſſes her hand with rapture.*) You reſtore me to life.

Hair. But, my God! he is totally ignorant of hairdreſſing. Look only how he has bungled it!

Mrs *Brum.* That is nothing to you; take yourſelf off.

Hair. Wait, fellow; I will have you before the Juſtice.

Liſ. Heark'ee, friend, which way came you in?

Hair. At the door, to be ſure.

Liſ.

Liſ. Then you can ſurely find your way out again. Come, march.

Hair. He ſhall be flogg'd out of the city.

Mrs *Brum.* Flog my valet! You are a brute—

Liſ. A fool—

Nan. A rude fellow—

Fritz. An envious cub.

Hair. Thou art a thief! a bungler!

Fritz. and *Liſ.* (*Puſhing him to the door.*) Away! away! out! out!

SCENE XI.

At this moment enters Mr PIFFELBERG; *behind him his Huntſman, with half a dozen of hares.* FRITZ *and* LISETTE *puſh the Hairdreſſer againſt* Mr PIFFELBERG; *he throws him againſt his Huntſman, and the Huntſman ſhoves him out at the door.*

Hair. (*Within.*) A bungler! a bungler!

Piff. What does the fellow mean with his bungler? Are not theſe hares well ſhot? and all this morning?

Mrs *Brum.* Already returned, Herr Von Piffelberg?

Piff. To be ſure I am return'd; and what bring I with me? half a dozen of hares as a peace offering between thee and me.

Mrs *Brum.* The price you ſet upon peace is very ſmall.

Piff. Now, I think ſix hares—

Fritz. And a bear into the bargain.

Piff. There are no bears in this country.

Mrs *Brum.* If I knew that true repentance brought you to my feet—

Piff. To be ſure, dear darling; there they are all at your feet—

Fritz. The moſt penitential hares in the world.

Mrs *Brum.* My God, the animals ſtink!

Piff.

Piff. How can they ſtink? they were but ſhot this morning. Ha! ha! ha!

Fritz. The gentleman is himſelf a little wounded.

Mrs *Brum.* Young man, for a valet, you take too many liberties.

Piff. A valet! (*He looks at him with great attention.*) Lightning and hail! Are not you the young Baron who drank wine with me yeſterday evening in the coffee-houſe?

Mrs *Brum.* A Baron!

Fritz. I drink wine! Oh, thou good God, I am glad if I can get ſometimes a draught of ſmall beer.

Piff. My ſoul, you are he! Did we not drink out three bottles?

Fritz. You are upon the wrong ſcent, Sir.

Piff. Did we not make ourſelves right merry?

Fritz. Heaven only knows who it was that made himſelf merry with you.

Piff. Did you not ſay, that a young handſome lady liv'd here in the inn, who had an old ugly mother? Did you not call the mother an old ugly beaſt? Did you not drink the young Lady's health?

Mrs *Brum.* Heavens! ſhould it be poſſible!

Liſ. (*Aſide.*) Now, we are in a pickle.

Nan. (*Aſide.*) I die.

Fritz. You are blind, Sir.

Piff. I blind! and have this morning ſhot four hares?

Fritz. Blind! blind! I tell you blind! blind! blind! blind! (*He powders him all over, and runs away.*)

Piff. (*Spluttering.*) Zounds—Baron—I am a Nobleman—a ſp—ſportſman—ſ'tup, ſ'tup—we muſt fight with piſtols.

Mrs *Brum.* Oh! how I feel! The ſcales fall from my eyes—this affront upon me—I faint.

Piff. The fellow is a poacher, and wanted to hunt on ſtrange grounds.

Mrs *Brum.* I die! Where is my only faithful friend?

Piff. Here! Here!

Mrs *Brum.* The only one who never deceiv'd me, my Mops—my laſt comfort (*She ſtaggers towards her cloſet.*)

Piff. May I acccompany you?

Mrs *Brum.* (*Weak and faint.*) Go to the deuce! Oh! [*Exit.*

Piff. So is my kindneſs receiv'd.

Nan. So, Sir! I will tell that to my mother.

Piff. So, Miſs! and who is to blame for the whole baiting? A briſk young huntſman has ſcented your foot, ſteals after you thro' wood and buſh—

Liſ. And an old huntſman cries halloo! to ſtart the game. Is that right?

Piff. No, that is not right.

Liſ. Well then, come Miſs; we will leave the Gentleman in good company (*She points to the hares, and exit with Nannette.*)

SCENE XII.

PIFFELBERG *alone.*

Here I am, ſtanding alone like a mileſtone, and powder'd like a truſs'd hare. Lightning and hail! if the old one had no money, I'll be curs'd if I would ſet another foot in a country where an honeſt fellow is left to ſtick in the mire. What ſhall I do! A crow that carries gold to its neſt muſt be ſhot. I ſhall be obliged, however, to make uſe of the garden key to unlock the gold cheſt. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

ACT II.—SCENE I.

The ſame Room.

LISETTE *comes out of the Bed-chamber, goes to the middle door, and calls*

Molkus!

Mol (Within) Here.

Liſ. (Plaintive) Molkus!

Mol. (Within) What is the matter?

Liſ. (*More plaintive*) Dear Molkus!

Mol Well!

Liſ. (*Very friendly and merry*) Good day, dear Molkus.

Mol. Nothing more!

Liſ. Is a good day nothing?

Mol. Nothing in thy mouth.

Liſ. Then, may heaven ſend thee the worſt, the moſt miſerable one, in its whole ſtock.

Mol. Thanks.

Liſ. As bad as that in which thou loſt thy leg.

Mol. It was a day of honour to me.

Liſ. Ha! ha! ha! Men are merry, fooliſh creatures. A ſoldier loſes his leg, it is his day of honour! A girl thruſts her neck into the matrimonial nooſe, it is her day of honour! A nun takes the veil, it is her day of honour! The firſt receives a medal, the ſecond a huſband, and the third nothing at all. It is quite right that fools with the cap and bells are diſmiſs'd. Every man is a fool. Is it not true, dear Molkus?

Mol. No!

Liſ. The wooden leg looks down upon the ſtraight leg; the ſtraight leg upon the crooked leg; and the crooked leg again upon the wooden leg.

Mol. Chatter baſket! (*He is going.*)

Liſ. Whither art thou going?

Mol. Away!

Liſ. Knoweſt thou already what I have to ſay to thee?

Mol. No!

Liſ. And art thou determined not to know it?

Mol. Yes!

Liſ. But thou ſhall'ſt know it! My Lady orders thee to ſtand centinel here, as ſhe intends to drive out.

Mol. Well!

Liſ. She is not well, however.—Away! No! Well! What ſort of anſwers are theſe?

Mol. Short.

Liſ. Doſt thou ſquare thy anſwers by thy ſhort leg?

Mol. Yes.

Liſ. I'll tell thee ſomething, friend: Get thy head ſhot away! thou makeſt as little uſe of it as of thy leg.

Mol. I talk not always with women.

Liſ. Blockhead! What is there the greateſt occaſion for with women?

Mol. Every thing but the head.

Liſ. My God! And if there were not any women, who would ſet your heads to rights.

SCENE II.

MRS BRUMBACH, NANNETTE. *The former.*

Mrs *Brum.* Molkus!

Mol. Here.

Mrs *Brum.* I ſhall drive out for half an hour to my milliners.

Mol. Well.

Mrs *Brum.* Thou ſee'ſt here two trifling women?

Mol.

Mol. Yes.

Mrs *Brum.* But thou ſee'ſt not a bold impudent lad, who lies in ambuſh for one of them?

Mol. No.

Mrs *Brum.* He will probably profit by my abſence. If he comes, I order thee to turn him out.

Mol. At the door or the window?

Mrs *Brum.* Which moſt pleaſes thee.

Mol. Well.

Mrs *Brum.* (*to Nannette.*) In the mean time, thou ſimple thing, read in the works of Madame Beaumont or Madame de Genlis, "Pour former le coeur et l'eſprit." And thou, Liſette, take good care of Mops. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

NANNETTE, LISETTE, *and* MOLKUS.

(*Molkus places a chair againſt the door, and ſits himſelf upon it; takes a ſhort pipe from his pocket, fills it, and ſtrikes fire.*)

Liſ. Thou did'ſt not aſk if we might alſo ſmoke tobacco?

Mol. No.

Liſ. Miſs, fall quick into a fit.

Mol. As you pleaſe.

Nan. I am not an adept in that yet, Liſy; I muſt take a few leſſons from my mother.

Liſ. Now would be the beſt opportunity to ſpeak to your lover.

Nan. Do'ſt think ſo?

Liſ. He is certainly not far off.

Nan. Methinks, I feel a ſomething——

Liſ. How ſhall we rid ourſelves of the blockhead?

Nan. Give him kind words.

Liſ.

Liſ. I would rather give them to Mops; he will make the beſt return he can, by wagging his tail.

Nan. We will both try.——Dear Molkus—

Liſ. Pretty Molkus—

Mol. What more?

Liſ. Thou ſit'ſt very uncomfortably there.

Mol. It will do very well.

Liſ. An old deſerving ſoldier like thee ſhould be taken by the hand.

Mol. A wooden leg is of more value than a woman's hand.

Liſ. In the Lady's room ſtands a ſoft ſtuff'd ſofa—

Mol. Let it ſtand.

Liſ. We will lead thee to it.

Mol. Thanks.

Liſ. Then I will draw from beneath the bed the bottle of Dantzic gold water—

Mol. I am not thirſty.

Liſ. But perhaps hungry? There is yet an almond tart—

Mol. I eat ammunition bread.

Liſ. Then come below into the kitchen, that I may give thee a piece of roaſt meat to it.

Mol. It is too early.

Liſ. It will ſoon be dark.

Mol. Knoweſt thou the reaſon?

Liſ. Well!

Mol. Becauſe it is near night.

Liſ. And knoweſt thou why thou art a block?

Mol. No.

Liſ. Becauſe thou art all night; night in head, and midnight in heart.

Mol. So!

Liſ. What ſhall we do now with the blockhead?

Mol. Nothing.

Nan. (*Stroking his chin*) Thou art an honeſt fellow, Molkus.

Mol.

Mol. Alas! It is not true.

Lif. Thou deſerv'ſt to have thy picture taken, on account of thy honeſty—

Nan. And fram'd and glaz'd—

Lif. Then we would hang thee under the looking-glaſs.

Nan. Oh that thou wert hanging there juſt now—

Lif. (*Half aſide*) Or under the gallows.

Nan. Let me ſtep out for a ſhort time upon the balcony?

Mol. I dare not.

Lif. To take a little freſh air! We ſhall be ſmother'd here by the fumes of tobacco.

Mol. It is not ſo dangerous.

Nan. Dear, pretty Molkus, can'ſt thou refuſe me any thing?

Mol. I can.

Lif. Hear only how the lovely Lady flatters—

Mol. And the lovely mother growls.

Lif. Is then all in vain?

Mol. All.

Lif. We may therefore talk to each other without compliment?

Mol. Without compliment.

Lif. Tell me, then, do'ſt reliſh that pipe?

Mol. O yes.

Lif. Knoweſt thou where the proper place for ſmoking is?

Mol. Where 'tis moſt agreeable.

Lif. No; in the guard-room. (*She knocks the pipe out of his hand.*)

Mol. (*Picks it quietly up.*) Do that once more!

Lif. Well; and what then?

Mol. I'll pick it up again.

Lif. Dear, curs'd Molkus, I pray the put thyſelf into a paſſion?

Mol. Paſſion is troubleſome.

Lif.

Lif. Nothing troubles thee, my iron Molkus. Thou can'ſt be in a paſſion without danger. My wooden poſt, place thyſelf amongſt the peaſe, and frighten the birds away.

Mol. I am doing that juſt now.

Lif. Thou art as faithful to thy poſt as a painted ſoldier at an entrance; thou haſt as much ſpirit as a lump of lead; and as much courage as a band-dog.

Mol. And thou art as witty as a chambermaid.

Lif. Tell me in how many battles did'ſt thou take to thy legs?

Mol. Take to my legs!

Lif. It cannot be otherwiſe; thou muſt have run away; for thy whole feeling lay in thy leg. As ſoon as that was ſhot away, thy cloddiſh trunk lay ſtill; but I'll wager thy leg twirl'd round for ſome time like a ſpindle in a mill.

Mol. Thou art a poiſonous ſpider.

Lif. Immoveable blockhead! do'ſt think we are Turkiſh Sultanas? and do'ſt thou degrade thyſelf by keeping the poſt of a miſerable eunuch?

Mol. I know what part of thy body is invulnerable.

Lif. Well, let us hear?

Mol. Thy lungs.

Lif. It is too much trouble to talk to thee.

Mol. Then let me alone.

Lif. Thou can'ſt neither hear nor ſee; neither taſte nor feel; thou can'ſt do nothing but ſmoke thy abominable tobacco.

Mol. The tobacco is not abominable.

Lif. Come, Miſs, let the clown alone; he is worſe than an oyſter; he has not two ſenſes. (*A knocking is heard.*

Mol. I have ſurely two ſenſes, for I hear the knocking.

Lif.

Liſ. Riſe, then, and go out. *(The knocking increaſes.*

Mol. Riſe? Yes—But, go out! No. (*He riſes, and puts his head out at the door.*) Who goes there?

A rough voice. A good friend.

Mol. What good friend?

The voice. An old invalid, who wiſhes to ſpeak with honeſt Hans Molkus.

Mol. An invalid! Stop, my fellow. (*He comes in.*) Miſs and Maid, march to your rooms.

Liſ. Very cheerfully. Thinkeſt thou we will ſit in thy tobacco college, and ſuffer ourſelves to be ſmok'd thro' and thro'?

Nan. Come, we will ſee what Mops is about.

Liſ. Alas! Fate has doom'd us to ſee no other faces than Mops faces. [*Exeunt.*

Mol. (Opens the door.) Come in, my fellow.

SCENE IV.

FRITZ *as an Invalid, with a wooden leg and ſeveral ſcars upon his face.* MOLKUS.

Fritz. Welcome, old fellow. Haſt thou forgot me?

Mol. Hum; I never knew you.

Fritz. Haſt thou forgot George Fróhlich of the Steinacker regiment?

Mol. George Fróhlich? Hum.—I have no recollection of him.

Fritz. Haſt thou forgot how, in the year 57, we lay before Prague?

Mol. Before Prague? Oh! that I remember well. Our regiment was encamp'd right hand by Ziſkaberg—

Fritz. How the Auſtrians made a ſortie againſt the batteries of Strohhof—

Mol. And how Prince Ferdinand of Pruſſia drove them back—

Fritz. How they afterwards made an attack on the ſide of Wiſherad—

Mol. And how our Cartouches took them in the flank—

Fritz. How Prince Von Lothringen attempted to ſurpriſe us with 4000 men—

Mol. And how we drove them back with bloody heads?

Fritz. 'Twas a pity that the bad weather ſet in—

Mol. And that the Moldaw ſwell'd ſo much—

Fritz. And carried away our bridges.

Mol. Right, comrade; I ſee thou waſt there.

Fritz. I not there? Thouſand devils, I was there when our battalion attack'd the Auſtrians by the windmill at Segeſchof. Thus we ſtood, and thus we march'd upon them. (*He marches ſtraight towards Nannette's door.*) Hey there, holla, where is the enemy? Out of the holes there.

Mol. Still, ſtill, comrade; that is no windmill; Ladies are encamp'd there.

Fritz. Ladies! Heaven defend me! I would ſooner attack Croats.

Mol. I agree with you there.

Fritz. When I hear of Ladies, I fly like a Frenchman at Roſsbach.

Mol. Right; we agree in that too.

Fritz. I would rather loſe my other leg.

Mol. Where was thy leg ſhot off?

Fritz. At Collin.

Mol. At Collin! It was there where I came off the loſer.

Fritz. They are perhaps lying in the ſame hole together. The Devil take the legs, if the heart be but ſtout and hearty. Come, comrade, let us drink together. (*He takes a flaſk from his pocket.*)

Mol.

Mol. With all my heart. To the health of old Fritz.

Fritz. Long life to Fritz. (*He drinks and hands the flaſk to Molkus.*)

Mol. At Collin I ſerv'd under General Hulſen at the attack of Kirchhof.

Fritz. I was in Manheim's brigade.

Mol. There you would have to flaſh about with the Pandores.

Fritz. See'ſt thou not this croſs ſcar upon my cheeks?

Mol. Periſh the Pandores. (*They drink freely.*)

Fritz. I was before Schweidnitz as we ſtorm'd the Waſſer Fort.

Mol. I fought in the trenches before Olmútz.

Fritz. We were attack'd near Gibau by Laudon, as we were eſcorting a tranſport commanded by Ziethen.

Mol. We ſweated furiouſly in the defiles of Klenau.

Fritz. What is Klenau! At Leuthen there was warm work.

Mol. But, comrade, you appear to me ſo young, and yet have ſerv'd during the whole ſeven years war—

Fritz. Comrade, I am an old youth: Wine has made me young again. Drink, brother, drink; he muſt drink who wiſhes to retain his youth.

Mol. Yes, yes; muſt drink. (*He drinks.*)

Fritz. No women, and much wine, makes young blood.

Mol. Yes, yes; much wine. (*He drinks.*)

Fritz. What brought thee here in this houſe to the women? I would rather lie in the barracks.

Mol. What brought me to the women? I ſtand centinel here.

Fritz. For ſhame, comrade; thou haſt ſtood cen-

tinel many a time before the General's tent, and now before women.

Mol. What can one do, comrade? One muſt adapt one's ſelf to the times. Two legs are neceſſary in the field, one in winter quarters.

Fritz. (*Feigning drunk.*) Is that thy opinion? Hey, my hearty fellow, he who dances about with women muſt have two legs at leaſt.

Mol. (*Who begins to feel the power of the wine.*) Two tongues would be of more uſe to him.

Fritz. He who has a pair of ſound arms. muſt ſtill fight. I therefore enliſted with the Heſſians—

Mol. With the Heſſians?

Fritz. And went to America.

Mol. With one leg?

Fritz. Look'ye, comrade, I laid my account that I had only one more leg to loſe.

Mol. How ſo?

Fritz. Becauſe my other was lying ſnug near Collin.

Mol. By my ſoul thou art right; thou art a knowing one. Long life to thee. (*He drinks.*)

Fritz. But I would rather win three battles by land, than ſink once at ſea.

Mol. The ſea muſt be deſperate wet—

Fritz. And always drunk; always drunk.

Mol. The ſea?

Fritz. Ay, my hearty, it is true what I tell thee. For example, I wiſh to ſteer that way; but the ſea ſays no, and I muſt ſteer this way. (*He reels towards Nannette's room.*) Then I wiſh to tack again; but craſh comes a wave, and daſhes me upon the rocks. (*He drives againſt the door, that it flies open.*)

Mol. Ha! ha! ha! ha! Take heed, my fellow; thou art running upon a ſand-bank.

Fritz. I believe I am faſt already. Ho, there, help! help!

Mol.

Mol. Ha! ha! ha! I tell thee the coaſt is inhabited by women.

Fritz. Let them come; when I have drank my can of grog, I am not in the leaſt afraid of them.

Mol. They are not very diſagreeable to me either, when I have got a little wine in me.

Fritz. I'll fire guns of diſtreſs. Piff, poff, puff.

Mol. Piff, poff, puff.

Both. (*Together.*) Piff, poff, puff.

SCENE V.

LISETTE, *immediately afterwards* NANNETTE.

Liſ. My God, what an abominable noiſe! Do you think, you drunken clowns, that this is a market place?

Fritz. (*Secretly.*) Liſy, Liſy, I am Baron Wellinghorſt!

Liſ. (*Screams.*) Ah!

Mol. Right, Liſy; thou art an excellent market woman.

Liſ. Dear Lady, make haſte, come out.

Nan. (*Enters.*) What is the matter?

Liſ. Here is a ſot, whom you are to make ſober.

Fritz. Deareſt girl, love plays a comedy.

Nan. Ah! Is it poſſible?

Liſ. (*Makes up to Molkus.*) Now, Molkus, how goes it?

Mol. Still upon two legs, my pretty child.

Fritz. The minutes are precious; I love you; I adore you.

Liſ. Is that an old comrade of thine?

Mol. We lay together before Prague.

Fritz. Dare I flatter myſelf with any hopes?

Nan. Ah!

Fritz.

Fritz. May I conſtrue that ſigh to my advantage?

Nan. Can I forbid it you?

Liſ. It was hot work there.

Mol. Piff, poff, puff. Here Pandores, there Croats.

Fritz. Will you be my wife?

Nan. My mother will never give her conſent.

Liſ. I never ſaw any Pandores.

Mol. The fellows have the Devil in them.

Fritz. Fly into my arms.

Nan. Againſt the conſent of my mother? Never.

Mol. But when a Pandore ſees a bonny laſs, for example thee, Liſy—

Liſ. Well.

Mol. He becomes as tame as a lamb.

Liſ. Ay!

Fritz To-morrow we will throw ourſelves at the feet of thy mother, and implore her pardon.

Nan. Whoever aſks for pardon has previouſly ſinn'd.

Mol. My ſoul! thou art a daſhing laſs.

Liſ. Really!

Fritz. If you lov'd me?

Mol. If thou lov'dſt me?

Nan. Has my heart not betray'd me?

Liſ. *(Stroking his beard.)* Do'ſt thou then think that I hate thee?

Fritz. Fly then this night, and to-morrow thou art mine for ever.

Mol. You don't hate me, little rogue?

Nan. I am watch'd by a thouſand eyes.

Fritz. Love will blind them all.

Liſ. Who can look upon the brave Molkus, and remain indifferent?

Mol. Is that true? Give me then a kiſs.

Liſ. If thou will't promiſe to marry me.

Fritz.

Fritz. May I make an attempt this night to carry you off?

Mol. Marry? Ha! ha! ha! I never married in my life.

Nan. How can you force your way thro' bolted doors?

Fritz. That is my affair.

Lif. Try it only; we will live together like turtle doves.

Mol. Like turtle doves? Ha! ha! ha!

Fritz. Have I your conſent?

Nan. I confide to you my innocence.

Mol. But the kiſs; the kiſs.

Lif. (*Kiſſes him.*) There thou haſt it.

Fritz. (*Embraces her.*) Heavenly girl!

Mol. (*Perceives it.*) Hey, there! Comrade—

Fritz. What is the matter, brother?

Mol. Thou makeſt an aſſault upon Schweidnitz.

Fritz. The fortreſs is ours.

Mol. Victory! Let us fire a "feu de joie." Piff, poff, puff.

Mrs *Brum.* (*Within.*) Take off the horſes.

Lif. My God! the old one comes!

Nan. Ah! My mother!

Fritz. Where ſhall I fly?

Lif. She is at the door already.

Fritz. Is the window high?

Lif. A ſingle ſtory; it looks into the garden.

Fritz. Till our next meeting, dear Nannette—(*He gets upon a chair, and from the chair out at the window.*)

Nan. Ah! May he eſcape unhurt.

Mol. Hey, there, comrade! Whither bound?

SCENE VI.

MRS BRUMBACH. *The former.*

Mrs *Brum.* What a noiſe is here! When the cat is from home the mice will play.

Liſ. (*Aſide*) She has forgot the chair.

Mol Victory! The old cat is come.

Mrs *Brum* Molkus, art thou drunk?

Mol. The fellow has but one leg, and ſprings like a wild goat.

Mrs *Brum.* Who has given him any thing to drink?

Nan. Not I.

Liſ. Nor I.

Mrs *Brum.* Go, blockhead, to thy bed.

Mol. (*To Liſette.*) Come, then, little wife, we will go to bed.

Mrs *Brum.* Art thou mad?

Liſ. To-morrow, dear Molkus, to-morrow.

Mol. To-morrow the chaplain ſhall come. "Hans Molkus, will'ſt thou take this girl? Yes. Liſette Pert, will'ſt thou have Hans Molkus?

Liſ. No.

Mol. Yes. Goodnight, then, my darlings; ſound ſleep. (*He reels towards the window*)

Mrs *Brum.* Whither art thou going?

Mol To ſee where my comrade is.

Mrs *Brum.* Thy comrade!

Mol. (*Calling out at the window.*) Holla! George Fröhlich, where art thou?

Liſ. (*Puſhing him away from the window.*) Thou art wrong, there is the door.

Mol. I cannot forſake my comrade.

Mrs *Brum.* What is the meaning of this?

Nan. He is drunk.

Mol.

Mol. Drunk here, drunk there, he ſtorm'd the Waſſerfort before Schweidnitz; and therefore—

Liſ. (*Dragging him to the door.*) And therefore thou muſt go to bed.

Mol. We muſt fire a feu de joie.

Liſ. Fire on the outſide as long as thou pleaſeſt. (*She puſhes him out at the door.*)

Mol. (*Without.*) Piff, poff, puff.

Mrs *Brum.* Has nobody been here?

Nan. Not a ſoul.

Mrs *Brum.* Look in my face. (*Nannette raiſes her eyes fearfully.*) Can'ſt thou ſwear it?

Nan. Liſy, can I ſwear?

Liſ. Why not! A perſon muſt be very cunning, indeed, to find his way in here. Has not the drunken beaſt always ſat before the door? Has he not ſmok'd us with his tobacco as black as a philoſopher's ſtudying lamp? Do you ſmell nothing, Madam? Tobacco and brandy?—it ſmells here as bad as in a guardhouſe.

Mrs *Brum.* Why did you not ſtay in your rooms?

Liſ. We came out to meet you as we heard the carriage drive before the door.

Mrs *Brum.* How goes it with Mops?

Liſ. He is ſleeping ſoundly.

Mrs *Brum.* It grows late; away to your beds.

Liſ. Shall I not undreſs you, Madam?

Mrs *Brum.* No.

Nan. Shall I not read to my dear Mama the evening prayer?

Mrs *Brum.* No. Go to your beds: I will ſit up a little; it is a beautiful clear ſtar-light night, and I underſtand a little of aſtronomy: I know the Great Bear and the Jacob's Staff.

Liſ. Alas! (*Aſide.*) Where is our ſatellite of Venus?

Nan. (*Kiſſes her mother's hand.*) Goodnight to you, dear Mama.

Mrs *Brum.* Go, my child; and take care not to ſleep ſo much: think on the affront which you receiv'd to day, and you have cauſe enough for a ſleepleſs night.

Nan. An affront to me!

Mrs *Brum.* Haſt thou already forgot the impudent fellow and his powder-bag?

Nan. Ah! I was ignorant that a girl was affronted by an offer of marriage.

Mrs *Brum.* He marry thee! A lad juſt come from ſchool, and a girl ſcarcely out of her leading ſtrings.

Nan. Indeed, dear Mama, he will marry me.

Mrs *Brum.* So! Where gain'd you that information?

Nan. I ſuppoſe—

Mrs *Brum.* I ſuppoſe thou art a fool.

Liſ. Marry! What are you thinking of, my young Lady? One comes, one ſtares, one loves, one burns: Firſt a flame, then cinders, and then aſhes. Woe to the girl who makes an aſh-pot of her heart.

Mrs *Brum.* Right, Liſy. Explain this topic a little more to her on going to bed.

Liſ. To bed, to bed.

SCENE VII.

MRS BRUMBACH *alone.*

Soon will the hour of trial ſtrike entire ſubmiſſion, my Herr Von Piffelberg. Will he who, as lover, is afraid of catching cold, fetch the phyſician to me on a cold winter's night, ſhould I be ſuddenly taken ill, when he is my huſband? To *my* convenience muſt every nerve be ſtretch'd; not to his own. In ſhort, if he makes no uſe of the garden-key, door and heart are ſhut to him for ever. He

He who voluntarily mounts a galley the third time, and delivers himſelf up to be chain'd to the oar, deſerves not one grain of compaſſion. I will, however, extinguiſh the lights, to liſten, perhaps, to a ſoliloquy. (*She extinguiſhes the lights.*) Confeſs it now, Salomeh: it is thy wiſh that this adventure may paſs off well, for that abominable condition in which thou haſt already liv'd forty-eight years. Huſh! For heaven's ſake, that no one heard it. Age has, alas! betrayers enew, without the tongue joining in the conſpiracy. What is that? Why do the trees under the window ruſtle ſo violently? It even appear'd to me as if the window rattled. Ay, really! The draught tells me that it opens more and more. Should Piffelberg, to give me a proof of his affectionate compliance, come in at the window, oh! that would be charming; that would deſerve my whole eſteem. Hark! hark! I muſt wait the reſult.

SCENE VIII.

FRITZ *opens gently the window, and puts in his head.*

Fritz. Hiſt! hiſt! All is ſtill! all is dark! I may venture. (*He ſteps in, the wooden leg is left behind.*) Here I am again; but how to proceed? It is ſo dark, I cannot ſee my hand before me. There, on the right hand, is the door. (*He gropes about.*) Hiſt! hiſt!

Mrs *Brum.* (*In the back ground.*) Hiſt! hiſt!

Fritz. An anſwer! (*Low*) Is any one here?

Mrs *Brum.* (*With a feigned voice.*) I am here.

Fritz. My beloved!

Mrs *Brum.* Yes.

Fritz. Oh! haſten then into my arms.

Mrs *Brum.* Here, here!

Fritz. Where! Where! (*He gropes about to the ſpot whence the voice proceeds, and embraces Mrs Brumbach.*) I have thee in my arms, and no power on earth ſhall ſeparate us.

Mrs *Brum.* (*Crying.*) Oh! that is not Mr Piffelberg!

Fritz. (*Leaving hold of her.*) Hell and Devils! that is not Nannette!

Mrs *Brum.* Help! Help! Thieves! Robbers!

Fritz. Now for a pleaſant ſtory.

SCENE IX.

HANS MOLKUS *with a light. The former.*

Mol. What is the matter here? Are the witches holding their Sabbath?

Fritz. Odds, thunder! it is the old one.

Mol. Hey, comrade, where got you your leg?

Mrs *Brum.* Who are you, Sir? What want you here?

Fritz. (*Much embarraſs'd.*) I have long wiſh'd—to have the honour—of your acquaintance—

Mrs *Brum.* And for that you muſt creep in at the window?

Fritz. If I dare ſay all—if I could have the happineſs—to ſpeak a few words to you—without witneſſes—

Mrs *Brum.* (*To Molkus.*) Set the light down, and go away.

Mol. But tell me, comrade, where got you that leg? Get me mine again?

Mrs *Brum.* Away, I order thee.

Mol. The fellow is a conjurer. (*He ſets the light upon the table, and exit.*)

SCENE

SCENE X.

FRITZ *and* MRS BRUMBACH.

Mrs *Brum.* Well, Sir, now we are alone—

Fritz. (Aſide.) What the Devil ſhall I ſay to her?

Mrs *Brum.* I am extremely anxious to learn, how it comes to paſs that you appear at the preciſe time at which I expected Mr Piffelberg, and in ſo very extraordinary a manner?

Fritz. Mr Piffelberg! On that very account, Madam; as I know that the power which Nature has given to your charms extends over a man to whom I am very nearly related.

Mrs *Brum.* To whom you are very nearly related! How is that?

Fritz. Oh! kind Lady, you ſee in me a plaything of fate, an unfortunate child of love.

Mrs *Brum.* A baſtard!

Fritz. Herr Von Piffelberg is my father.

Mrs *Brum.* Your father!

Fritz. My mother was his houſekeeper; and—ſomewhat more. The charms of her youth being blighted, the monſter turn'd her adrift upon the wide world; and her exiſtence, as well as my own, depended wholly upon the generoſity of others—

Mrs *Brum.* So it is when we ſtray from the path of virtue.

Fritz. I grew up, and became a ſoldier. I have fought in Ruſſia againſt the Turks, and in Flanders againſt the French. The ſcars which cover my face are vouchers of my courage.

Mrs *Brum.* Did your father then ſhew no affection for you?

Fritz.

Fritz. How often have I written to him the moſt moving letters? but his heart was always ſhut to my intreaties.

Mrs *Brum.* *(Aſide)* Poor young man, he excites my compaſſion.

Fritz. An accident brought me at length to this town. I heard that my father had met with the ſame fate of all thoſe who ſee you, that he lov'd you, that he ador'd you.

Mrs *Brum.* Leſs poetry, if you pleaſe.

Fritz. I learn'd at the ſame time, that you were the moſt lovely, the moſt benevolent woman, that the hand of Nature ever form'd. A ray of hope illumin'd my deſpairing ſoul: I form'd the reſolution of applying to you—

Mrs *Brum.* But why juſt in at the window? And ſpoke you not in the dark of a beloved?

Fritz. Will you forgive me, that, bereft of every hope, I apply'd to Liſette your chambermaid, to enable me to approach your perſon; and that this night we were to conſult together, how to intereſt your ſoft feeling heart for an unfortunate, who might, with the moſt profound veneration and eſteem, be indebted to you for the mitigation of his ſufferings.

Mrs *Brum.* It was Liſette, then, whom you expected?

Fritz. Whom elſe? Dear Madam, ſhe it is who painted to me the charming picture of all your virtues in the moſt heavenly colours! She it is who bade my boſom indulge the hope, that you would exert the power which you poſſeſs over my father, for the benefit of a youth who feels the pangs of miſery leſs acute by being in the company of ſo amiable a woman!

Mrs *Brum.* (*Aſide*) The young man ſpeaks well. (*Loud*) Well, I promiſe you to uſe my influence with your father.

Fritz.

Fritz. (*Kiſſes her hand with rapture.*) Rejoice! rejoice, poor Fritz! the beautiful Mrs Brumbach is thy friend!

Mrs *Brum.* I expect your father every moment; you ſhall be witneſs—

Fritz. Oh! No, no! I will owe all to the power of your charms, and nothing to the workings of Nature. Permit me to take my leave.

Mrs *Brum.* No—you ſhall ſtay.

Fritz. My father might—when he ſees me ſo ſuddenly—

Mrs *Brum.* I will read him a pretty lecture on ſuch behaviour.

Fritz. I know him—he is obſtinate.

Mrs *Brum.* Know you not that love leads lions in ſilken threads?

SCENE XI.

MR PIFFELBERG. *The former.*

Piff. Well, here I am! Thunder and lightning! it is a cool night.

Fritz. (*Aſide.*) Now, ſupport me, impudence.

Mrs *Brum.* Welcome, Sir. You are a pretty fellow! You have not yet mentioned a word to me of your having children!

Piff. I! Children?

Mrs *Brum.* That a ſon of yours roams about the world, whom you ſuffer to be hunted by miſery?

Piff. A ſon! Of mine?

Mrs *Brum.* And really a very handſome young man, who well deſerves to have ſome trouble beſtow'd upon him.

Piff. Are you making a fool of me?

Mrs *Brum.* Shame on you! Know you this youth?

Piff.

Piff. I never ſaw him in my life.

Fritz. (*At his feet.*) Yes, my father! Stifle not the voice of Nature; acknowledge me as your ſon, your unfortunate Fritz!

Piff. What the Devil! Are we acting a comedy here?

Fritz. Oh! as yet it has been a tragedy. Change you it into a comedy; throw your fatherly arms around me; and let the tears of paternal affection roll down upon my cheeks.

Piff. Young man, are you mad?

Fritz. Your cruelty will deprive me of my ſenſes.

Mrs *Brum.* Will you continue to ſhut your heart to the ſoft voice of Nature?

Piff. The fellow is a fool, who makes a fool of me.

Fritz. Hear you that, dear Madam? He ſpurns me! Me, the ſon of his houſekeeper, who lov'd him faithfully; who always took care of his kitchen and his linen in the moſt diſintereſted manner. He wiſhes me miſerable! He wiſhes my death! Well, then, cruel father, to-morrow ſhall they drag my corpſe from the bottom of the river! To-morrow curſes will be poured upon thy head. Hugh!—I already ſee the Devil ſtretching out his claws to catch my poor ſoul. Away! Away! To hell!—(*Aſide*) Stop, I will calefy thee a little better. (*He ruſhes out.*)

Mrs *Brum.* And you ſuffer him to go?

Piff. Ay! he may go to the Devil! The fellow is craz'd! Why does not the police confine ſuch ragamuffins?

Mrs *Brum.* Craz'd! No, Sir, he ſpoke very intelligibly.

Piff. But, lightning and hail! there is as little underſtanding in it as in an air gun: He who has no houſekeeper, cannot have a ſon; and he who has no ſon, cannot be a father. How can he?

Mrs

Mrs *Brum.* You deceive me: it is very probable that he is your ſon.

Piff. Why? Becauſe he is ſomething of a handſome fellow?

Mrs *Brum.* What reaſon can he have to give himſelf out for your ſon?

Piff. Aſk St Hubert: he knows as well as I.

Mrs *Brum.* In the firſt place, you are not rich—

Piff. Alas! no.

Mrs *Brum.* In the ſecond, you have a hard heart.

Piff. Odds, thunder! muſt one then found a foundling hoſpital to gain the reputation of a tender heart? I cannot endure thoſe hearts which ſmile when I ſmile, and weep when I weep.

Mrs *Brum.* What advantage could he hope to derive from ſuch an impoſition?

Piff. I ſay, once more, the holy St Hubert knows better than I. The fellow is a fine blade: he has left his three adherents far behind in villany. Who knows what are his deſigns?

Mrs *Brum.* If he throw himſelf into the river—

Piff. There is no danger.

Mrs *Brum.* If he be dead to-morrow—

Piff. I will be condemn'd to ſhoot ſparrows and dig for moles all my life.

Mrs *Brum.* I ſee, my Herr Von Piffelberg, that you poſſeſs more artifice than I gave you credit for.

Piff. The Devil take me, Madam; there is not ſo much artifice in me as in a panful of gunpowder.

Mrs *Brum.* I muſt alſo tell you, that my chambermaid is acquainted with the young man—

Piff. Oh! that I can well believe: chambermaids have many acquaintances—

Mrs *Brum.* And therefore is capable of unmaſking your hypocriſy.

Piff. My conſcience is as bright as my gun.

Mrs *Brum.* We will hear that directly. (*She opens the door of her room.*) Liſette, are you to bed?

Liſ. (*Within.*) No, Madam.

Mrs *Brum.* Come here then a moment.

SCENE XII.

LISETTE. *The former.*

Liſ. Here I am; what are your orders?

Mrs *Brum.* Thou art a pretty bloſſom; thou keepeſt a nocturnal rendezvous.

Liſ. I, Madam?

Mrs *Brum.* Thou permitteſt young fellows to creep in at the windows.

Liſ. (*Aſide.*) O woe! woe!

Mrs *Brum.* But I will forgive thee this time, if thou will't confeſs, without circumlocution, where thou firſt became acquainted with the young man?

Liſ. Here, in this houſe. He was ſo friendly—ſo generous——

Mrs *Brum.* And who inform'd you that he was the ſon of Mr Piffelberg?

Liſ. (*Stares.*)

Piff. Out with it: I will know what's behind: For, ſhort and good, I will not endure it, that the firſt, beſt gallows bird of the highway ſhall give himſelf out for my ſon, for no one purpoſe whatſoever.

Liſ. Has he, then, confeſs'd that this Gentleman is his father?

Mrs *Brum.* To be ſure. He has implor'd my interceſſion, and referred me to you.

Liſ. Well, then, ſince he has already betray'd the ſecret himſelf, I muſt confeſs that he really, and in fact, has the honour of being very nearly related to Mr Piffelberg.

Piff.

Piff. With the Devil, but not with me.

Mrs *Brum.* There we have it. Haſt thou any proof, Liſy?

Liſ. O yes—for—one cannot ſay all—

Piff. Out of the buſh, there!

Mrs *Brum.* Thou, perhaps, knoweſt his mother?

Liſ. His mother—yes—ſhe is a diſtant relation of mine.

Mrs *Brum.* Now, Mr Piffelberg—

Piff. Cat-traps, fox-traps, and wolves pits! I'll ſuffer myſelf to be ſhot to death with peaſe, if a ſingle word of the whole twittle twattle be true.

Mrs *Brum.* A penitent confeſſion would perhaps have gain'd you my pardon; but, now—what muſt I believe? There are certainly more ſuch boys of your's rambling about in the world. Who knows how many a deceiv'd girl ſits behind her wheel, and wets the flax with her tears over thy unfaithfulneſs?

Piff. The Devil fetch me, Madam; my innocence is ſo pure, that this night I could raiſe a ſpirit.

Liſ. I ſhould not much like to ſtand in the circle.

SCENE XIII.

FRITZ *as a Lady, her face veil'd. The former.*

Fritz. (To Piffelberg.) Do I find thee at laſt, thou faithleſs man? Have I at laſt diſcovered thy artifices?

Mrs *Brum.* What is this!

Liſ. Again a new ſcene!

Fritz. Is this the reward for my fidelity and conſtancy? Is this the fulfilment of thy oaths?

Piff. Lightning and hail! am I in a madhouſe!

Mrs *Brum.* Who are you, Madam? What do you want?

Fritz. Pardon, Madam, an unfortunate, who has been betray'd in the moſt cruel manner. A thouſand times has this Gentleman ſworn eternal love to me; a thouſand times has he promis'd me marriage. This ring he gave me as a pledge of his conſtancy. (*She weeps.*)

Mrs *Brum.* Is it poſſible?

Piff. Woman, art thou poſſeſs'd with the Devil?

Fritz. So, now, I am poſſeſs'd with the Devil; but as you lay at my feet, and with the ſweeteſt words talk'd away my innocence, then I was an angel.

Piff. One of Satan's angels.

Fritz. (*Sobbing.*) And now you ſpurn me, now that I carry the pledge of love under my heart?

Piff. Odds, thunder! another child!

Mrs *Brum.* I ſtand amaz'd!

Fritz. Long has it been told me, that you walk'd in Vice's path; but I would not believe it. I gave myſelf the trouble to watch you, and as you at midnight ſneak'd from your houſe, like a thief, I ſneak'd after you.

Piff. Woman! I'll tear thy ſlanderous tongue from thy throat.

Mrs *Brum.* Softly, Sir; I take her under my protection.

Fritz. Ah! dear, kind Lady, you are generous and beautiful; your charms only can exculpate the betrayer.

Piff. Satan, come but out before the door; I'll twiſt thy neck, and pack thee off to the houſe of correction.

Fritz. There, Madam, you hear him. Ah! poor unfortunate maid, what ſhall I do? I dare not ſtir, or he murders me.

Piff.

Piff. Yes, thou hawk, that I will; thou rook, thou ſcreech owl.

Mrs *Brum.* Be eaſy, Madam, not a hair of your head ſhall be touch'd. Go, in the mean time, to my daughter; there you are in perfect ſafety.

Fritz. Ah! dear Madam, report ſays not too much of you, when ſhe deſcribes you as the moſt generous of women.

Mrs *Brum.* Lead her in, Liſy *(ſecretly)*, and let her out at the backdoor; thou haſt the key.

Liſ. (*Stifling a laugh.*) Very well, Madam.

Fritz. to *Piff.* Farewell, thou tyrant. Ah! thou ſtill belov'd betrayer. (*She goes with Liſette into the cloſet.*)

SCENE XIV.

MRS BRUMBACH *and* MR PIFFELBERG.

Piff. This is what one gains by not remaining quietly in bed at midnight. Mere curs'd ſpells! Satan has let looſe ſeven of his evil ſpirits.

Mrs *Brum.* You would willingly perſuade me that Satan is the father of your baſtards.

Piff. May the fiend throttle me on the neareſt croſs road, if I ever ſaw the woman in my life, no more than the curs'd fellow who will be my ſon in ſpite of my teeth.

Mrs *Brum.* Short and good, Sir, it is all over between us.

Piff. But firſt make ſome enquiries.

Mrs *Brum.* What is there to enquire about? Here a ſon, and there a miſtreſs.

Piff. The one deſerves the gallows, and the other to be broken on the wheel.

Mrs *Brum.* Then, to be ſure, you would have nothing to pay for their ſupport.

SCENE

SCENE XV.

LISETTE. *The former.*

Liſ. Ah! Madam, the diſaſter!

Mrs *Brum.* What is the matter?

Liſ. Oh! I can ſay no more.

Mrs *Brum.* Has the woman fainted?

Liſ. She is run away.

Mrs *Brum.* Well; ſo much the better.

Liſ. And has taken your daughter with her.

Piff. There have we the fleece.

Mrs *Brum.* What! Speak?

Liſ. As I unlock'd the back-door for her, as you order'd me, on a ſudden ſhe threw the cloak and veil from her, and then I ſaw that it was a young man; and then I ſaw him take Miſs Nannette in his arms; and then I ſaw him fly away with her like lightning.

Piff. And the young man was pregnant? Ha! ha! ha!

Mrs *Brum.* Could'ſt thou not have cried out?

Liſ. I would have done it; but he drew forth a dagger, pointed it to my heart, and told me he would kill me that inſtant if I made the ſmalleſt noiſe.

Mrs *Brum.* Ah! unfortunate mother! What ſhall I do! My child! my only child!

Piff. Did not I foretel it? Downright impoſitions.

Mrs *Brum.* Ah! deareſt Mr Piffelberg, if you love me, haſte—fly—overtake the robber.

Piff. So! I thought it was all over between us?

Mrs *Brum.* I have wrong'd you; forgive an unfortunate deceiv'd mother.

Piff.

Piff. Will you then marry me, if I bring her again?

Mrs *Brum.* Yes, yes.

Piff. Its enough! I will ſee if I can find the hare's track. He'll wind about, but I'll follow him to the ſeat whence he ſprung. [*Exit.*

Mrs *Brum.* Away, Liſette—call Molkus, he muſt ſearch thro' all the ſtreets—and thou, too, call the watchmen to thy aſſiſtance—let the gates be lock'd—Run—hunt about—Oh! I could tear the hair from my head.—(*She ruſhes into her room.*)

Lif. Yes, if ſhe had any to tear. [*Exit ſmiling.*

ACT III.—SCENE I.

The common Room in the Inn. Night.

NANNETTE *runs from* FRITZ'S *Room,* FRITZ *follows her.*

Nan. No! I will not ſtay in your room.

Fitz. Why not?

Nan. I know not why, but my feelings tell me that it is improper.

Fritz. Do your feelings tell you, then, that it is more proper to be here?

Nan. There is no danger in a common room thro' which any one may paſs at all times.

Fritz. What danger is there in my room?

Nan. I know not; but when I am there alone with you, my heart throbs; it even throbs here, but not ſo much.

Fritz. Well; is it ſinful for the heart to throb?

Nan.

Nan. I know not; but I had a Governeſs who us'd to ſay, "Beware of every thing which makes thy heart throb, or the blood riſe in thy cheeks."

Fritz. She had probably a callous heart, and not a ſingle drop of blood.

Nan. I pray you fetch a light.

Fritz. Are you afraid of ſpirits?

Nan. In general; but not when you are with me.

Fritz. Well, why then ſhall I fetch a light?

Nan. Why! Why! you always aſk, Why! and I can't give you an anſwer; but there is a ſomething in me that whiſpers, Aſk him to fetch a light.

Fritz. And what will that ſomething ſay if I refuſe?

Nan. It will be uneaſy.

Fritz. Your eyes are ſufficient light for me.

Nan. He who ſeeks darkneſs has ſome bad deſign.

Fritz. Can nothing naughty be done by light?

Nan. No; one is aſham'd of one's ſelf.

Fritz. Think only, if there were a light here, three ſteps from this ſpot lives your mother. How eaſily could we be ſurpris'd and betray'd?

Nan. Oh, God! I almoſt wiſh I was betray'd.

Fritz. Then you do not love me?

Nan. O yes! my heart is your's; but it is certainly not right that we ſhould be thus together.

Fritz. Have you not promis'd to be my wife? and dare not man and wife be together?

Nan. Yes, man and wife; but we are not yet man and wife.

Fritz. In a few more hours we ſhall be ſo; as ſoon as day breaks.

Nan. Oh that it was day!

Fritz. Your impatience will yet ſpoil all. We ſhall

ſhall be ſurpris'd—you torn from me—and then you are loſt to me for ever.

Nan. I will remain faithful, conſtant, and true.

Fritz. I am uneaſy for our ſafety; take compaſſion on me, and come into my room.

Nan. I'd rather go to the ſtreet, or to the market-place.

Fritz. Wonderful girl! When a girl once runs away with a man, ſhe cannot well object to go to his room.

Nan. Did I run away with you? That was ſtupid.

Fritz. Do you repent of the ſtep?

Nan. Almoſt. What will you think of me? You muſt imagine me to be very thoughtleſs. And it is really the firſt time I ever ran away with a man.

Fritz. (*Smiling.*) Indeed I believe it.

Nan. I know not how, but you came upon me ſo by ſurpriſe—

Fritz. To-morrow all uneaſineſs will be forgotten. In the mean time, a plan occurs to me, by which your delicacy may be ſpared: I will lead you into the bed-room of my Guardian.

Nan. Into a man's bed-room!

Fritz. A man fifty years old.

Nan. With whom I am not acquainted!

Fritz. I will remain with you,

Nan. But if he fall aſleep, then we ſhall ſtill be alone.

Fritz. Droll girl! A lamp burns by his bedſide.

Nan. And when he awakes—

Fritz. I'll preſent my wife to him.

Nan. It would be ſtill better if he did not ſleep at all.

Fritz. (*Smiling.*) Well, be it ſo, I will awake him.

Nan. Go then.

Fritz. Come with me.

Nan. No; you muſt firſt go and awake him, and then he muſt come for me himſelf.

Fritz. I'll even do that. But I don't like to leave you here alone; but it is the affair of a minute. Stir not from your place; and if any one paſſes thro', hold your breath. (*He goes into Felix's room.*)

Nan. (*Alone.*) Do I ſtill breathe? I feel my powers chill'd. I tremble like an aſpen leaf. Why then did my Governeſs ſay, "It is the villain only that trembles." My heart tells me there is nothing wrong in love.

SCENE II.

MRS BRUMBACH *ſteps ſoftly out of her Room.*

Mrs *Brum.* Methinks I heard voices. (*She liſtens*). No, all is ſtill. My God! how much anxiety and ſorrow does that naughty girl cauſe me. However, let me but have her once more in my clutches, and I will ſhut her up inſtantly in a convent. (*She goes in again.*)

Nan. In a convent! Ah! I will rather go into the young Baron's room.

SCENE III.

FRITZ. FELIX *in a Night-gown, with a Lamp.*

Fritz. Here, honeſt Felix, here is the dear coy laſs—

Felix. Fritz! Fritz! What have you done?

Fritz.

Fritz. Aſk me rather, What I intend to do? I ſhall marry her.

Felix. After ſuch an action, you muſt do it.

Fritz. My God, I deſire nothing more! Turn about your lamp, and look upon that heavenly face.

Nan. Dear ſtranger, take compaſſion on my innocence—be a father to me.

Felix. A father, my child, is ſtill eaſier deceiv'd than a mother.

Nan to *Fritz.* Hear you that? He reproaches me. Ah! that cuts me to the heart. I will return to my mother. She will confine me in a convent: there I ſhall weep inceſſantly; but here I cannot be happy.

Fritz. Dear Felix, liſten to the voice of the pureſt innocence. If you ever lov'd me, be now a friend to me.

Felix. I compaſſionate your weakneſs; but ſtill more the innocence of this good girl. I will befriend you, but only on one condition.

Fritz. I agree to it.

Felix. As ſoon as day breaks, you muſt throw yourſelf at the feet of her mother, and aſk her bleſſing.

Fritz. Willingly, willingly!

Felix. Until then, the young Lady remains under my protection.

Nan. Ah! now my heart feels light.

Felix. Will you confide yourſelf to me?

Nan. With joy. Benevolence and honour are imprinted on your countenance. I confide myſelf to you.

Felix. Go then, dear child, into that room; I'll follow you immediately.

Fritz. Go, Nannette, and ſleep a little.

Nan. I ſleep! Feel how my heart beats. When

I caught the ſmall-pox my feelings were the ſame and then I could not ſleep at all. [*Exit.*

Fritz. Leave not the poor timorous thing alone.

Felix. One word to you, young man: A woman's virtue is poliſh'd ſteel; a breath, and it is tarniſh'd.

Fritz. Not by the breath of love?

Felix. By that the moſt. The girl ſeems an unſpotted lamb. If this were one of your common intrigues—if you were capable to ſacrifice her after three days to your caprice——

Fritz. Never.

Felix. I hope not. I know your heart; but I muſt tell you, ſhould it happen, I forſake you immediately, and call down the curſes of your father upon you.

Fritz. To-morrow ſhe is my wife.

Felix. As ſoon as the mother's conſent is gain'd, ſhe is your wife.

SCENE IV.

MRS BRUMBACH *ſteps once more to the Door.*

Mrs *Brum.* I ſtill think—Jeſus Maria—a ghoſt! *(She claps the door to.)*

Fritz. That was the old one.

Felix. What are my feelings! The voice is not unknown to me.

Fritz. You have probably heard a raven croak before?

Felix. Well, I now go to keep the timorous creature company. In the mean time, remain where you can; but ſhew not your face to her again without bringing the mother's conſent. [*Exit into his room.*

Fritz.

Fritz. (*Alone.*) That will be a little difficult; ſtill I muſt try it. When the great get an appetite for a province, they begin by taking it away, and then the treaty comes after. Nannette is in my power; that is the chief point gain'd: and if Mrs Brumbach were the Devil's great grandmother, her claws ſhould not tear her from me. But, now, what ſhall I do? I dare not go to my bride—I cannot ſleep—and praying I am not much us'd to. There is nothing moves ſlower in the world than the accompliſhment of a lover's wiſhes. There creeps one hour—one runs after it—one runs by it—one winks—all is in vain—it ſtill crawls on its ſnail-like pace——One tries to lift it up and help it forward—ah! 'tis a heavy load——One yokes wiſhes to it—they will not draw——One flogs it with the nettles of impatience—it ſtirs not——Accompanied with prayers and curſes—it arrives at laſt lazily at the goal——The lover embraces his miſtreſs—and then—Hugh!——The other hours fly as if they were mad—no halt can make them ſtop—no wiſh can call them back—away they fly—away into eternity—and ſometimes takes love with them.

SCENE V.

LISETTE *comes ſlily in at the middle Door.*

Fritz. Does not ſomething move? (*He coughs.*) Hem! Hem!

Lif. Hem! Hem!

Fritz. That is a female cough. (*Low.*) From what ſweet boſom proceeds this cough? No anſwer? Pſt! Pſt!

Lif. Pſt! Pſt!

Fritz.

Fritz. From what bewitching lips ſounds this *Pſt?*

Liſ. Is it you, Baron?

Fritz. Baron! Yes, there is no ſcarcity of Barons in the world—which doſt thou look for?

Liſ. Baron Wellinghorſt.

Fritz. Right; and thou?

Liſ. I am Liſette.

Fritz. Ah! Liſette, is it thee? Come here, let me embrace thee. Thou comeſt quite *à propos* to keep me company.

Liſ. Where is my young Lady?

Fritz. In ſafety with my Guardian. But whither art thou wandering, little rogue, in the middle of the night?

Liſ. My miſtreſs ſent me out to look for you.

Fritz. Haſt thou found me then?

Liſ. Do not joke. I know not where I ſhall ſtay.

Fritz. Stay with me.

Liſ. Take me to my young Lady.

Fritz. That will not do.

Liſ. Why not?

Fritz. She is with my Guardian; a croſs old man.

Liſ. My God! Shall I then return to Mrs Brumbach?

Fritz. Who forces thee?

Liſ. She will ſcold, ſtorm, abuſe me; and heaven defend me if ſhe perceive that I favour your tricks.

Fritz. Be at eaſe; I dub thee, in this ſolemn hour, by the force of my matrimonial power, lawful chambermaid, waiting maid, or maid of the bedchamber, to my ſpouſe, now and for ever. In proof of the honeſty of my intention, I give thee this kiſs as an earneſt.

Liſ. (*Puſhing him back.*) That is ſtolen money; it belongs to your wife.

Fritz.

Fritz. Take it only; I ſtamp this coin new every minute.

Liſ. It is good for nothing, if love do not ſet his ſtamp upon it. Without joking, I enter into your ſervice. It is nothing more than juſt; for it is you who have entangled me in this hurly burly.

Fritz. Well, then, I will diſentangle thee.

Liſ. That is not the preſent buſineſs; where am I now at this moment? On the right hand is hell *(pointing to Mrs Brumbach's room)*, and on the left is Satan *(pointing to Fritz.)*

Fritz. What do'ſt thou think, then, of going into Purgatory until to-morrow.

Liſ. What does that mean?

Fritz. Look, there is the dreſſing-room—it is my cuſtom to powder there every morning. There are a pair of old cloaks hanging in it. In one corner is an umbrella, and in the other a lanthorn—will't thou paſs the night there?

Liſ. Rather there than with the old witch.

Fritz. Come, then, I will carry a chair in for you; and as ſoon as day breaks, Nannette ſhall liberate you.

Liſ. A fine opportunity for penitential thoughts.

Fritz. Tho' only as long as one is alone. (*He leads her into the dreſſing-room.*)

Liſ. My God! it is as dark as a tomb.

Fritz. Let the brightneſs of thy eyes illumine it.

Liſ. I am no cat, Sir.

Fritz. There, ſeat thyſelf upon this chair, and be as ſtill as a mouſe. Goodnight, ſweet Liſy; a ſound ſleep to thee. (*He ſhuts the door.*)—Now will I wander about the houſe like a ghoſt—I will liſten to every mouſe that gnaws behind the tapeſtry—to every little cricket that chirps behind the oven. (*Exit.*)

SCENE

SCENE VI.

HANS MOLKUS *enters at the middle Door.*

I would rather run after a retreating Huſſar than after a lover who runs away with his miſtreſs. A Huſſar's horſe has but four legs, but ſuch a fellow has wings. Here have I been running about half the night in wind and rain. My ſound leg is tir'd, and my wooden one all beſmear'd with mud. I can do no more. For me they may ſcamper into the deſarts of Arabia, and feed upon locuſts like holy St John. Shall I now return to the old one, and make my report that I have found nothing? That would be making bad worſe. I will rather encamp here to night, let matters go as they will. (*He ſeats himſelf in an arm chair.*) Lightning! the thing is as ſoft as if ſtuff'd for a gouty perſon. Well, God be thank'd I can only have the gout in one leg. Ay! now I am warm and comfortable again *(he gapes)*; and ſleep, with all its force, is laying ſiege to me. It is, to be ſure, no bed—but after ſuch a ſcampering——When I ſtood centinel—in the ſeven years war—have I often—lean'd on my arms—and nodded—nodded—nodded. (*He mutters a few unintelligible words, and falls aſleep.*)

SCENE VII.

PIFFELBERG; *and* MOLKUS *ſleeping.*

Piff. All my greyhounds would not overtake the hare. That is an old fox, who has been us'd to the trade; we muſt ſurround him, and hunt him down, or he'll ſlip thro' our fingers and devour his prey

prey without mercy. Here I have been ſplaſhing about a whole hour thro' thick and thin. What have I gain'd? Wet feet, headachs, and the rheumatiſm in my arm. Shall I now go and be ſcolded by the old one? The deuce take ſuch a feaſt; rather will I ſtay here until morning, and try if I can take a nap upon a chair. (*He gropes about, and ſtumbles againſt the chair on which Molkus is ſleeping.*) Oho! here is a chair. Now, I'll try if an old hunter can fall aſleep, after this drudgery, without a cradle hymn. (*He ſits upon Molkus's knee.*)

Mol. (*Awakes.*) Ho, there! The nightmare! the nightmare!

Piff. Lightning and hail! What is this?

Mol. (*Claſps him in his arms.*) I have him! I have him!

Piff. Devil! Let go your hold.

Mol. The robber is caught!

Piff. All good ſpirits praiſe God the Lord.

Mol. Light here! light here!

Piff. Thou art the Prince of Darkneſs.

Mol. I will not let go my hold. Where is the young Lady?

Piff. Devil's claws! leave hold.

SCENE VIII.

FRITZ *dreſs'd as a Butler, hump-backed, and hobbling, with a patch upon one eye, and a light in his hand. The former.*

Fritz. What a noiſe is here! Gentlemen, what are you doing?

Piff. Ah! Molkus, is it you?

Mol. Ah! Mr Piffelberg, is it you? I thought it was the thief.

Piff. I thought it was the Devil.

Mol. Why then did you ſet yourſelf upon my knee?

Piff. I had rather lie in Abraham's boſom, than ſet myſelf again where I did. I am ſo terrified, that all my limbs quake.

Mol. I came but yeſterday to this houſe; but if it be as unruly every night, the Devil may take the ſervice.

Fritz What want you here ſo late in the night?

Mol. I have been running after the runaway Lady.

Fritz. Hobbled after, you mean.

Piff. I was upon the ſame hunt.

Fritz. Has ſhe eſcap'd you both?

Piff. Aſk me rather, if I can overtake a hare?

Mol. Who knows in what ambuſh ſhe has entrench'd herſelf?

Fritz. If I could now tell you?

Piff. Thou!

Mol. Thou!

Fritz. You muſt not betray me?

Piff. No, by my ſoul.

Mol. Let us hear?

Fritz. The young people are ſtill in the houſe.

Piff. and *Mol.* Where! Where!

Fritz. Look, yonder is the dining room—

Piff. Well!

Fritz. They are not there—

Piff. Go on! go on!

Fritz. And there is the dreſſing-room—

Mol. Well!

Fritz. They are not there either.

Piff. Rogue, we do not want to know where they are not.

Fritz Patience, patience; where they are not they may yet come.

Piff. Therefore thou thinkeſt they will—

Fritz. I have heard it whiſper'd, that when all

is

is quiet in the houſe, the young Gentleman intends hiding her in the dreſſing-cloſet.

Mol. In the dreſſing-cloſet! A fine ambuſh.

Fritz. But the young Lady is not willing; ſhe ſays it is too dark, too lonely for her.

Piff. Where then will ſhe go to?

Fritz. Into the dining-room.

Piff. We muſt watch there.

Fritz. But the young Gentleman inſiſted upon the dreſſing-cloſet.

Mol. We muſt lie in ambuſh there.

Fritz. But Miſs inſiſted upon the dining-room. No, ſaid he—yes, ſaid ſhe—no, yes, no, yes.

Piff. Lightning and hail! who got the better?

Fritz. Hear; this is my opinion—mind well what I am going to ſay to you; if you both go into the dreſſing-cloſet, and the young Lady comes *not* there—

Mol. We keep watch for no purpoſe.

Fritz. Right; but if both of you go into the dining-room, and the young Lady goes into the dreſſing room—

Piff. We are thrown out.

Fritz. Right; but if one of you be hid *here*, and the other *there*, ſhe cannot eſcape you.

Piff. Bravo! Methinks I have her already.

Fritz. Hold her faſt.

Piff. Give thyſelf no trouble about that.

Mol. I'll garriſon the dining-room.

Piff. Do ſo; and if I hear a noiſe I'll come to thy aſſiſtance.

Mol. Right ſo: the allied army draws a cordon. (*He hobbles into the dining-room.*)

Fritz. Away, then, into the dreſſing-cloſet.

Piff. Give me the light with me?

Fritz. God forbid! If a light be ſeen, nobody would come in.

Piff. But it is not haunted?

Fritz. Ha! ha! ha! Pretty girls are ſometimes there.

Piff. Pretty girls are not always pretty ſpirits. (*He goes into the dreſſing-cloſet.*)

Fritz. So; now ſit there for me until broad day-light. Creep on, creep on, ye leaden hours; but a time will come in which I will dance with you thro' the world.

SCENE IX.

MRS BRUMBACH *and* FRITZ.

Mrs *Brum.* (*Stepping out ſlily.*) God be thank'd there is a light. Heark'ee, friend, is all right here in the houſe?

Fritz. How ſo?

Mrs *Brum.* I have heard a bouncing about——

Fritz. The cats.

Mrs *Brum.* I have alſo ſeen a form, a horrible ghoſt.

Fritz. (*Aſide.*) She was then probably looking into her glaſs.

Mrs *Brum.* All my people are ſent out; do me the favour to remain with me.

Fritz. Heartily, dear Madam; where can I ſpend my time more pleaſantly than with you?

Mrs *Brum.* Have you heard any thing of my daughter?

Fritz. Of your daughter?

Mrs *Brum.* You ſhrug your ſhoulders. Speak—

Fritz. I know well—

Mrs *Brum.* What do you know?

Fritz. That ſhe is run away.

Mrs *Brum.* I know that well.

Fritz. The young people met me on the ſtairs.

Mrs *Brum.* And you did not detain them?

Fritz.

Fritz. Were I to detain every body I meet upon the ſtairs—

Mrs *Brum.* But, my God! you ſaw well—

Fritz. What did I ſee? A young Lady with a young Gentleman! That is nothing uncommon in an inn.

Mrs *Brum.* Where did they go to?

Fritz. Between ourſelves, I have an idea they are yet in the houſe.

Mrs *Brum.* Yet in the houſe! Good friend, I will make you a handſome reward if you will aſſiſt me to catch her.

Fritz. I'll do it with pleaſure for nothing. Pleaſe only to go into the dining-room.

Mrs *Brum.* Well?

Fritz. There, on the left hand, you will find a door, which opens on a long paſſage, in which burns a lamp—

Mrs *Brum.* Go on.

Fritz. You go on quite to the end of the paſſage, when you come to a ſmall ſtaircaſe—

Mrs *Brum.* Which I aſcend.

Fritz. Not at all; but which you deſcend, and you find yourſelf on a ſudden in the yard.

Mrs *Brum.* What muſt I do there?

Fritz. What you pleaſe.

Mrs *Brum.* Blockhead, where then ſhall I find my daughter?

Fritz. You go acroſs the yard, and leave the cow-houſe on your left hand—

Mrs *Brum.* If I wanted an ox, I ſhould not have far to go.

Fritz. By this time you will ſee the waſhing-houſe in the back-ground—

Mrs *Brum.* Is ſhe there?

Fritz. God forbid; but near to the waſhing-houſe—

Mrs *Brum.* Well, near to the waſhing-houſe—

Fritz.

Fritz. Is the laundry—

Mrs *Brum.* Is ſhe conceal'd there?

Fritz. Perhaps.

Mrs *Brum.* At laſt! I will be quick in throwing a cloak about me, my friend, and you ſhall accompany me.

Fritz. Heartily. (*Mrs Brumbach goes into her room.*)

Fritz. (*Alone.*) I accompany thee, old dragon! No; I have no inclination to bathe myſelf with thee in a miſt puddle. I have now provided for all my very good friends; and I'll leave them to extricate themſelves as well as they can. (*He ſets the light upon the table and runs away.*)

Mrs *Brum.* (*Returns in a fur cloak.*) Here I am again. Where is the ſluggard? He has really forſaken me and my reward. No matter, I know where I muſt ſeek my runaway. Dining-room, paſſage, ſtairs, yard, cow-houſe, waſhing-houſe, laundry; right. Shall I take the light with me, or leave it here? To be ſure it is dark in the dining-room, but there is a lamp in the paſſage. I had better creep ſlily in the dark, and come as ſuddenly upon them as Peter the Great upon the conſpirators. If the ghoſt do but keep his diſtance— (*She goes into the dining-room. After a ſhort pauſe, Molkus is heard within*)

I have her! I have her!

Mrs *Brum.* Help! Help!

Mol. What help! Your mother will ſoon help you. Out of the hole here.

SCENE

SCENE X.

MOLKUS *burſts open the Door, with* MRS BRUMBACH *in his arms, and bawls, whilſt dragging her out,*

I have her! I have her!

Mrs *Brum.* (*Who knows Molkus.*) Molkus, what is the matter with thee?

Mol. (*Looks at his booty, lets her fall, and ſtands ſtaring at her, trembling with fear.*)

Mrs *Brum.* Art thou drunk again?

Mol. It appears that I am bewitch'd.

Piff. (*Within.*) I have her! I have her!

Liſ. Help! Help!

Mrs *Brum.* What is that?

Mol. He has her faſt, if the Devil has not alſo play'd him a trick.

Piff. (*Within.*) Struggle as thou will'ſt, I will not loſe my hold.

SCENE XI.

PIFFELBERG, *holding* LISETTE *in his arms, burſts the Door open with his foot, and drags her out, crying,*

I have her! I have her!

Mrs *Brum.* Mr Piffelberg, what is the meaning of this? What part are you performing? What are you doing with my chambermaid?

Piff. (*Looks at his prize, quits his hold, and ſtands ſtaring at her.*)

Mrs *Brum.* Upon what wild-gooſe chace have you been?

Piff. As it appears, upon the chace of witches.

Mrs

Mrs *Brum.* I am quite petrified. Did not I ſend you all three out? and I now find you at home! My gentle Mr Piffelberg, what were you doing in the dreſſing-room?

Piff. I was upon the watch.

Mrs *Brum.* And Molkus, what wert thou doing in the dining-room?

Mol. I lay in ambuſh.

Mrs *Brum.* And thou impudent girl?

Liſ. I—I—was trying—to mend the lace border in which you tore a hole at the laſt ball.

Mrs *Brum.* Mend lace in the dark? And you, Mr Piffelberg, are not you aſham'd of yourſelf?

Piff. Of what! That the Devil plays at bo-peep in your houſe.

Mrs *Brum.* Is this friendſhip in need? Is this love? Inſtead of purſuing my daughter, I find you in a ſuſpicious corner with my chambermaid.

Piff. Lightning and hail! The Devil take you and your daughter. I am tir'd of the chace. I had no ſooner ſet a foot in your houſe, than Satan let looſe all his evil ſpirits. There comes a curs'd fellow, and calls me father; another rogue gives himſelf out for my miſtreſs; and at laſt, when I have got hold of your daughter, ſhe changes ſuddenly into your maid. Is not that a ſpectacle? It cannot go madder upon Blockſberg. So, dear Madam, I am your moſt obedient humble ſervant. Rather will I gormandize potatoes and turnips amongſt the ruins of my caſtle, than marry into ſuch a bewitch'd family. [*Exit.*

Mrs *Brum.* Ah! miſerable woman! The daughter has run away; the lover runs away; all, all forſake me!

Mol. I ſee plainly the ſpy has miſled us.

Mrs *Brum.* But, come, Molkus; I know where Nannette is conceal'd. Take the light, and follow me,

me, thro' the paſſage, in the yard, in the cow-houſe, in the waſhing-houſe, in the laundry.

Mol. God be with us; ſhe is crazy.

SCENE XII.

FRITZ *in his true form. The former.*

Fritz. (Throws himſelf at Mrs Brumbach's feet.) Stop, dear Madam, and forgive that love which is the cauſe of all this hurly burly.

Mrs *Brum.* Who are you, Sir? What want you from me?

Fritz. I am the ſeducer of your daughter.

Mrs *Brum.* And you dare to ſhew your face before me?

Fritz. Permit me to make reparation for my fault. I am Baron Wellinghorſt, the ſole heir of an opulent houſe.

Mrs *Brum.* And if you were heir to the Emperor of Abyſſinia—

Fritz. I love your daughter; your daughter loves me.

Mrs *Brum.* She ſhall repent of her diſobedience in a convent.

Fritz. No; that gentle ſoul will not be eternally angry. Thoſe beautiful lips were only made to pronounce a bleſſing.

Mrs *Brum.* Will you coo me with flattery? Away, Sir!

Fritz. Your pardon.

Mrs *Brum.* My curſe.

Fritz. At leaſt for your daughter.

Mrs *Brum.* As ſoon as I have twiſted her neck.

Fritz. Will you drive me to deſpair?

Mrs *Brum.* Yes, Sir, yes. I would that deſpair drove you to hell.

Fritz. You are not in earneſt?

Mrs *Brum.* *(With contempt.)* I jeſt not with children.

Fritz. Child! Am I then really your child?

Mrs *Brum.* You are my evil genius. Away with you.

Fritz. I riſe not until that beautiful hand is ſtretch'd out as a token of reconciliation.

Mrs *Brum.* Then you may remain there until the laſt trump.

Fritz. Well, Madam, here then will I remain until the ſun is extinguiſh'd, and the earth tears itſelf from its hinges.

Mrs *Brum.* You may ſpare your hyperboles. Never will I give my daughter to a man who betray'd the virtue of an innocent child——

Fritz. The virtue!

Mrs *Brum.* Who would cover my black hairs with ſhame.

Fritz. With ſhame, Madam!

Mrs *Brum.* You will not, however, make me believe, that it is a feather in the cap of a young woman to elope with a man, and conceal herſelf, God knows where.

Fritz. You do me injuſtice. Your daughter is under the protection of an old honourable man, my Guardian.

Mrs *Brum.* So! a fine ſort of a Guardian.

Fritz. He will himſelf convince you, that the honour and innocence of your daughter ſtill remains unſpotted; and that this night I have not dar'd once to ſee her. (*He ſprings up, and opens the door of his room.*) Come, Nannette; come, honeſt Felix; aſſiſt me to ſoften this hard maternal heart.

SCENE

SCENE XIII.

NANNETTE, FELIX. *The former.*

Mrs *Brum.* (*Screaming loud.*) Ah! my huſband!
Felix. Hell and fury! My wife!
Mrs *Brum.* Is it you, Charles?
Felix. Is it you, Salomeh?
Fritz. What is the meaning of this?
Mrs *Brum.* Art thou not dead?
Felix. Alas! no.
Liſ. A tender ſcene of recognition.
Mrs *Brum.* Have I not had thee advertis'd in all the newſpapers?
Felix. Have I not ſhunn'd thee every where like the plague?
Liſ. (*Aſide.*) Now has the old one a huſband all at once.
Fritz. (*to Felix.*) If I underſtand right, this Lady is your wife?
Felix. Alas! yes.
Nan. (*to Mrs Brumbach.*) Deareſt mother, is this Gentleman my father?
Mrs *Brum.* Alas! yes.
Liſ. How very moving and edifying.
Nan. (*embracing Felix*) My father! What unhop'd for joy.
Felix. My dear child; yes, thou enableſt me to ſupport the preſence of thy mother.
Fritz. Now have we on a ſudden a moſt powerful auxiliary. Dear Felix, from thy mouth I expect my ſentence.
Felix. Yes, dear Fritz, the girl is your wife. I know your heart. The wine is ſtill in a ſtate of fermentation, but it is good. Dear Nannette, thou wilt have occaſion for much patience with him.

Nan.

Nan. I will have patience enough, dear father.

Mrs *Brum.* Very well, Charles; you can do as you pleaſe; ſhe is your daughter. But if you think I will ever again be your wife, you are much miſtaken. I advertis'd you in all the newſpapers; and you are, on account of a malicious deſertion, as the advocates call it, formally divorc'd from me. The Upper Council has written twelve ſheets full upon the ſubject, and plac'd their great ſeal at the bottom of them.

Felix. I have not the ſmalleſt objection. For me you may marry three times, and get yourſelf as often divorc'd. You may retain what you enjoy of my property for the ſake of this lovely daughter which you gave me.

Mrs *Brum.* We can always meet in company with propriety?

Felix. O yes.

Mrs *Brum.* And I will never make the ſmalleſt mention of what I have ſuffer'd on your account.

Felix. Nor I.

Mrs *Brum.* Then, my dear children, I will not withhold my bleſſing from you.

Felix. God bleſs you; and, with tears, I entreat you not to follow the example of your parents.

Fritz. Deareſt Nannette, thou art mine.

Nan. Dear father!

Felix. Now, children, you muſt part. Go thou, Nannette, with thy mother; you, Fritz, come with me.

Nan. I am not at all ſleepy.

Fritz. Nor I.

Felix. To-morrow, children, to-morrow your wiſhes ſhall be crown'd. Goodnight, Madam.

Mrs *Brum.* Goodnight, Sir.

Fritz. Deareſt Nannette, may your ſlumbers be ſweet.

Nan.

Nan. Sleep well, dear Fritz.

[*Felix and Mrs Brumbach bow formally to each other. Fritz and Nannette kiſs their hands to each other. They go into their reſpective rooms.*]

Mol. A curious incident.

Liſ. Now, Molkus, yeſter evening thou would'ſt marry me?

Mol. I was drunk. [*Exit.*

Liſ. (*Alone.*) So! And was not the young Baron alſo drunk? Ay, ay, I fear in four weeks he will have outſlept his intoxication.

[*Exit.*

THE END.

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